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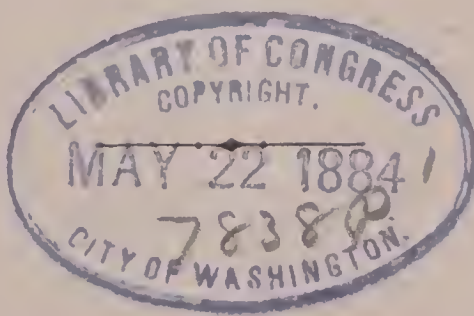
— IN —

TWENTY LECTURES.

— BY —

JOHN R. ^{Mosell} KELSO, A. M.

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P R E F A C E.

THE champions of the Bible have always arrogantly claimed that this book is the inspired Word of God ; that all of its teachings are absolutely true ; that they are all of a high and holy character ; that they are the source of all true knowledge, all true virtue, and all true morality ; that an implicit belief in them is absolutely essential to salvation ; and that to doubt either their authenticity or the holiness of their character constitutes a sin of so heinous a nature that it inevitably subjects the doubter to eternal burnings in fire and brimstone. To prove that this whole claim is utterly false ; to prove that the Bible is not the inspired Word of God ; that its teachings are not absolutely true ; that they are not of a high and holy character, etc., is the object of this book.

Believing that such a book will do much good ; believing that it will save thousands from the unutterable horrors of religious despair, such as I myself have suffered ; believing that it will even save many from the maniac's cell or the suicide's grave, I submit it to the world without any apology, and leave its merits to be determined by those who may give it a fair and unprejudiced examination. That a few errors and imperfections may be found

in it, I have no doubt. It would be strange, indeed, if so extensive a work on so important a subject should be found absolutely free from all imperfections. This is especially true of a work written, as this has been, under great difficulties—under difficulties that few men would ever surmount at all.

Being almost totally disabled by wounds received in the service of my country; being destitute of means; being often deprived of employment, by the relentless persecutions of the Church; and having a family of motherless and homeless children to support and educate on my limited earnings, my home, while writing most of these lectures, has been an old deserted warehouse; my seat has been an old, empty goods-box; my table has been an old board propped up at both ends; my food has been often soda crackers or bread alone; my bed has been but little of anything, and my company has been the bats that have kept up their monotonous circlings over my head. And yet, under circumstances apparently so hard; amid surrounding apparently so cheerless, my energies have never flagged. I have all the time been proud, independent, and hopeful. I have all the time felt that I was engaged in a great and good work; in a work that was to benefit my fellow-men long after my own eyes were closed in eternal slumber. I have never, for a moment, doubted the ultimate success of my long and arduous labors. And all I now ask is that, if the friends of Freethought find this book and my other writings to be works of real merit—works calculated to promote the cause of truth, of mental freedom, of humanity—they will cheerfully aid me all they can in placing these works before the world. This much I do ask.

The fifth, sixth, seventh, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth lectures of this course will be found to be almost identical with the six lectures that constitute my smaller work, entitled "Deity Analyzed," with which many of my readers are doubtless already acquainted.

THE AUTHOR.

Modesto, Cal., May 1, 1884.

THE BIBLE ANALYZED.

LECTURE FIRST.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

I NOW propose to subject the Bible to a full and fair analysis; to require it, like any other book, to stand or fall on its own merit. I am aware that, in doing this, I shall be treading upon forbidden ground; upon ground which priestcraft, under the name of religion, has always claimed to be peculiarly its own, and, consequently, too sacred to be touched by any except those whom the "Lord hath appointed." For my guides, however, I have chosen reason, science, and common sense, and these hold nothing too sacred for their touch. Whatever is able to bear the tests of their balances and their crucibles, they place, as an additional gem, in the glorious coronal of truth. Whatever fails to bear these tests, they reject as worthless, though it be a Bible, a religion, or even a God.

That which is true can bear any amount of fair investigation. Error, alone, shuns investigation. If, then, the contents of the Bible be absolutely true, the more we investigate them, the more manifest will their truth become. If, as claimed by its advocates, the Bible be, indeed, the Word of God, should it not be able to stand upon its own merit? If it cannot thus stand, ought it not to fall? If its advocates did not seriously doubt its real merit, would they so earnestly object to its being fully and fairly investigated?

As accepted by nearly all denominations of Christians, the Old Testament contains thirty-nine books. Of these books, sixteen seem to be devoted, principally, to the general history of the Hebrew nation. Two of the others, Esther and Job, seem to be partial biographies of the two persons whose names they respectively bear. Five others seem to be simply collections of songs, proverbs, etc. The remaining sixteen purport to be the writings of the same number of poets or prophets.

As you are all well aware, our priests, who claim to be chosen of God for our instructors, have always taught us that the contents of these books are the inspired Word of God; that an implicit faith in their truth is absolutely necessary to salvation; that to deny, or even to doubt, the truth of any portion of these writings, will inevitably subject us to the fearful consequences of God's eternal vengeance; to the inconceivable horrors, the unutterable torments, of absolutely endless burnings in the hottest flames of fire and brimstone. As you are also equally well aware, these priests have, in like manner, always taught us that God is absolutely infinite in duration, in extent, in wisdom, in power, in love, in justice, and in mercy; and that to doubt his infinite perfection in any of these attributes is inevitably to bring upon ourselves all the unutterable torments of an endless hell.

And now, let me ask, if these priestly teachings were all true, would we not have a right to expect that this God, as an *infinitely perfect cause*, would produce an *infinitely perfect effect*? Can we conceive of an *effect* as being *otherwise* than is its *cause*? If not, would we not have a right to expect that the Bible, proceeding thus, as an *effect*, from an *infinitely perfect source or cause*, would, in its every department and bearing, 'be *itself infinitely perfect*, like its *source or cause*? Would we not have a right to expect that the truths embodied in this book would all be so manifest that to doubt them, and to be damned for doubting, would be utterly impossible? Would we not have a right to expect

that this infinitely wise, this infinitely perfect, Being, in delivering his Word to men, would deliver it to them absolutely free from all obscurity, all absurdity, all obscenity, all triviality, all falsity, all immorality, all marks of ignorance ; all imperfections of any conceivable kind? Would we not also have a right to expect that a Being so infinitely wise and just would deliver his Word, man's only guide to salvation, equally and impartially, to all his equally needy and equally deserving children? Would we not have a right to expect, further, that he would effectually secure this precious Word from all possibility of loss or of corruption? In short, would we not have a right to expect that he would make a success of that which he undertook to accomplish?

On the other hand, would we have any right to expect that such a Being would deliver to men, as their highest code of morals, their only guide to salvation, a book full of obscurity, absurdity, triviality, falsity, immorality, gross ignorance, bad grammar, and many other faults and imperfections? Would we have any right to expect that he would be so horribly partial and unjust as to suffer three hundred and ninety-nine four-hundredths of his children to be eternally lost in hell, while to the remaining four-hundredth part alone he gave this wonderfully precious book? Would we have any right to expect that he would deliver the most important portions of this book to one man alone, an acknowledged liar, thief, and murderer, and then eternally damn all those who were unable to believe that man's testimony? Would we have any right to expect that he would select as his special favorites, his peculiar people, the sole guardian of his Holy Word, an insignificant tribe of men, noted only for their gross ignorance and superstition, their abject servility, their inordinate selfishness, their base treachery, their disgusting immorality, and their horrible blood-thirstiness? Would we have any right to expect that he would leave his Holy Word exposed to certain loss, and to equally certain cor-

ruptions? Would we have any right to expect that, for the promulgation of his Holy Word, he would depend upon the entirely accidental invention of paper and of printing, the avarice of book-sellers, and the fidelity of unauthorized, incompetent, and dishonest copyists and translators? Would we have any right to expect that, after his Holy Word had been long entirely lost, he would permit scores of unscrupulous priests to write books of their own and palm them off upon the world as reproductions of his lost Holy Word? Would we have any right to expect that he would permit angry, interested, ignorant, and unscrupulous, uninspired men, in noisy and discordant councils, to determine, by vote, which ones of these many books were "base forgeries," and which ones were the "true Word of God?" Would we have any right to expect that he would permit one of these noisy councils to make one set of these books true, and another council make this set false, and another set true? Would we have any right to expect that he would have scores of widely different Holy Words, each claiming to be his only true Holy Word? Would we have any right to expect that he would finally have the truth of his Holy Word established by the sword, the dungeon, the rack, and the stake? Would we have any right to expect that, in his Holy Word, he would represent the earth as constituting the entire universe; that he would represent it as flat and stationary; that he would represent the sky as a solid structure or firmament; that he would represent large bodies of water as resting on the upper side of this firmament or solid sky; that he would represent the sun, the moon, and the stars as being all at an equal distance from the earth, and as being all set or stuck, like nails, into the under side of this same firmament; that he would thus represent the sun, the moon, and the stars as being nearer the earth than were the waters which were above the firmament; that he would represent this setting of the sun, the moon, and the stars into a solid sky as necessary in order

to keep them from falling down upon the earth; and that he would represent himself as sitting upon a material throne that rested on the upper side of this same firmament? Would we have any right to expect that he would represent himself as encouraging his chosen people to lie, to steal, to murder, and to practice polygamy, concubinage, etc.? Would we have any right to expect that he would represent himself as devoting much time to the teaching of the priests how to make bonnets and petticoats for themselves, and how to roast various kinds of meats? Would we have any right to expect that he would represent himself as pardoning a certain amount of sins, in return for a certain amount of roast beef? Would we have any right to expect that he would represent himself as so shockingly indecent as to expose his own "back parts" to the morbid gaze of one old man? In a word, would we have any right to expect the Bible to be what it certainly *is*? Would we have any right to expect that God would make a *perfect failure* of his *whole undertaking*?

Of all the books of the Old Testament, by far the most important are those which profess to give an account of the creation, of the deluge, and of the laws and the doings of the Hebrew nation. All the rest of the Bible depends upon these books. If, then, these books prove to be unauthentic, the whole Bible becomes, of necessity, totally worthless, and all the religions founded upon it reduce to base, priestly impositions. We would naturally expect, therefore, that the authenticity of these books would be established beyond all possibility of doubt. We would also naturally expect that these most important portions of God's Holy Word would be entirely free from all human imperfections. But how do we find them?

At the very outset of our investigation, we find that every one of these books is *anonymous* and without *date*. This fact alone strips them of all just claim to belief. In regard to only two of them, Ezra and Nehemiah, can we find sufficient data upon which to base even a reasonable

guess as to who the authors were. These two books, or, at least, certain portions of them, were probably written by the men whose names they respectively bear. In regard to this matter, however, there is among Bible critics a great difference of opinion. This difference of opinion exists especially in regard to the Book of Nehemiah, in which the names of persons are mentioned who did not live till one hundred years after the death of Nehemiah. (See Jaddua, the priest, and Darius, the king of Persia, in Neh. xii, 22.) This portion of the book, therefore, could not have been written by Nehemiah. In the same way, other portions of this book are proved to have been written long after the time of Nehemiah.

Whether these books be authentic or unauthentic, however, makes very little difference. In neither case are they of any interest whatever to anybody but the Jews. Indeed, their entire want of importance is probably the reason why the authenticity of these books has never been more generally called in question. No one has ever seemed to care much whether they were or were not authentic. Of the other fourteen historical books of the Old Testament, no one pretends to know who their author's were, nor when, nor where, nor in what language, nor on what material they were written. Most theologians, however, find it convenient to assume that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, and that Joshua was the author of the book that bears his name. That this assumption is totally false, I will abundantly prove, as I proceed. These books, however, being, by far, the most important of all, I shall defer their consideration until I have examined all the others. I will then give them the careful notice that their importance demands.

The remaining eight historical books of the Old Testament are Judges, Ruth, the two books of Samuel, the two books of Kings, and the two books of Chronicles. As to who were the authors of these books, and as to when they were written, no Bible critic pretends to know. In their very

desperation, however, a few theologians have ventured to assume that Samuel was the author of the two books that bear his name. For this assumption, however, there is no ground at all. As well might we assume that Ruth was the authoress of the book that bears her name, and that some man by the name of Chronicles was the author of the books of that name. Like nearly all other books, the various books of the Bible were named, not after their several authors, but after the principal persons or subjects concerning which they severally treat. This is true of the two books of Samuel. He was simply one of the principal heroes of those books. His death and funeral are recounted at length in the first book, and in the second the history of the Jews is continued for over forty years after the death of Samuel. These facts clearly prove that the books were not written by Samuel. By whom, then, were they written, and what do we know of that person's character for intelligence and veracity?

Of the book of Judges I need say but little. No one pretends to know who wrote it, or when it was written. Consequently, it has no claim at all to authenticity. In the eighth verse of the first chapter, we read: "Now the children of Israel had fought against Jerusalem and had taken it." The fact that the book starts out thus with an allusion to the taking of Jerusalem is proof positive that it was not written till after the occurrence of that event. Elsewhere, however, we learn that Jerusalem was not taken till during the reign of David. This places the writing of the book at least four hundred years after the occurrence of the principal events which it professes to describe. It is quite probable, therefore, that the book is simply a collection of traditions. At any rate, many of the events which it professes to describe, such as Samson's various exploits, are of too incredible a nature to be recorded in authentic history.

As to the story of Ruth, it is of no importance whatever, and is, moreover, in some of its details, almost

indecent. The substance of it all is that, by the advice of her mother-in-law, Ruth, a handsome young widow, went out at night, to a threshing-floor, and crept into bed with Boaz, a half-drunken but wealthy old bachelor, who was sleeping there, and who, overcome by the charms of the cunning and lovely Ruth, was induced to marry her.

Since, as Paul declares, "all scripture is profitable. . . for instruction. . .," this scripture concerning Ruth and Boaz may be profitable for the instruction of those old bachelors who wish still to remain in single blessedness. Seeing how easily the poor old Boaz was overcome and made a benedict by the artful, if not immodest, trick of the beautiful Ruth, these old bachelors may learn to avoid a similar fate. They may learn that it is never safe for an old bachelor, especially when sleeping alone out at a straw-stack or a threshing-floor, to permit a beautiful young widow to get into bed with him. It may also be that buxom young widows, eager to remarry, are expected to learn, from Ruth's example, how to warm up sluggish old bachelors, and make them willing to become happy husbands. I know of nothing else that can be learned from this rather immoral story.

The two books of Kings are universally admitted to be anonymous; and, with this admission, they can have no claim to be authentic histories. When they were written, or where, no one pretends to know. That they were written, however, at a much later date than is usually assigned to them, is proved by the fact that the second book gives an account of the Babylonish Captivity. They evidently could not have been written, therefore, until after the occurrence of that event. This places the writing of them at least four hundred years after many of the events which they profess to record. Like the book of Judges, they were doubtless written from traditions.

With few exceptions, the two books of Chronicles cover the same grounds that are covered by the two books of Kings. To Chronicles, therefore, I need not give any

separate notice. Like Judges and Kings, they were written at a much later date than is usually assigned to them. Indeed, we have no proof that any portion of the Bible was written before the Babylonish Captivity, or about one thousand years after the time of Moses, and four hundred and fifty years before the time of Christ.

Being universally admitted to be an anonymous writing, the book of Esther can have no claim to be regarded as authentic history. Luther describes it as a book filled with "heathenish extravagance," and as one which was "more worthy than all of being excluded from the canon." Admitting, however, that the story of Esther be true, to what does it amount? At best, it is merely an account of the adventures of a beautiful woman who sought the extremely doubtful honor of becoming the favorite mistress of a king whose drunken debaucheries had so disgusted his lawful wife that she refused any longer to appear in his presence. The author highly approves this woman's conduct. For my own part, however, I see nothing very laudable in it. Are our women expected, as far as their circumstances will permit, to follow her example? If not, what benefit is to be derived from this story of her romantic amour?

As to the book of Job, Dr. Clarke enumerates ten grave grounds for doubting its authenticity. These grounds, which he gives at length, are certainly sufficient to strip the book of all value as a history. The learned Jewish authors, Eben Ezra and Spinoza, also declare that this book is not a Jewish production at all and that, consequently, it does not properly constitute any part of the Bible. With all this, and a great deal more, testimony against it, can the book have any claims upon our belief? Must we believe it or be damned?

Some theologians hold that this book was probably written by Moses. On equally good grounds, others hold that it was probably written five hundred years later, by Solomon. Others still, on equally good grounds, hold that it

was probably not written at all till the fifth century of the Christian era. When, and by whom, do you say it was written?

As a poetical romance, the story of Job is very beautiful—far superior to any others of the poetical fictions of the Bible. Its sublime language and its well-chosen imagery indicate a higher degree of mental cultivation than is indicated by any others of the Old Testament writings. Indeed, this evident superiority is one of the grounds assigned by Bible critics for doubting that it is a Hebrew production.

If regarded as genuine history, this story conveys to us much important information. It makes known the fact that, no matter what he may be now, the devil, in Job's time, was a person who walked about as do men—that he was an accomplished gentleman, an eminent scholar, a regular attendant at church, a companion of the sons of God. It also makes known the fact that, no matter what he may be now, in Job's time, God was likewise a person; that he frequented the same church at which his sons and the devil were wont to meet; that he paid very little attention to his sons, directing his discourse exclusively to the devil, whom he evidently regarded as a personage more worthy of his attention; that at one of these meetings he wagered his reputation as a judge of human character that the devil could not make the sturdy old Job curse; that, in order to decide this matter, he instructed the devil to have all of Job's ten children slain, and all his property destroyed or carried away; that the devil had all this done, and yet failed to make Job curse; that, consequently, God won this first wager; that, when they next met, at church, these same two gentlemanly sporting characters laid another wager to the same effect, but, by the conditions of which, the devil was to try Job with bodily afflictions; that the devil did this; that he covered Job all over with boils; that he thus made him curse like a sailor; and that, consequently, he won this second wager. And now,

let me ask, does salvation depend upon our implicitly believing all these things?

The Book of Psalms seems to be simply a miscellaneous collection of songs, most of which are of a religious nature. Similar collections of songs may be found among the writings of all civilized nations. By all Bible critics, the Psalms are admitted to have been written, or at least composed, by various authors, and at various times, during a period of over seven hundred years. As to who collected them into one book, and as to who first pronounced them to be inspired writings, no one pretends to know. Had any other collection of songs reached us, through the same channel, it would have had just as good a claim to be the result of divine inspiration as has the Book of Psalms. Whatever beauties, therefore, or whatever blemishes may be found in the Psalms, they are of no consequence in our present investigation.

The Book of Proverbs is simply a collection of wise sayings, such as are to be found among all nations. If found in any other book, they would be just as useful—just as much the result of divine inspiration, as they now are found in the Bible.

The Book of Ecclesiastes is universally admitted to be anonymous and without date. As to authenticity, therefore, it can claim none at all. Certain theologians assume that it was written by Solomon; and although this assumption is entirely unsustained by any proof, it may probably be correct. The book seems to be a wail of disappointment from some broken-down debauchee, who could no longer find pleasure in dissipation; and, if we can believe any portion of the Bible, Solomon, in his later years, was just such a man. Seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines would be sufficient to make almost any man turn preacher, and cry, "*All is vanity.*" Indeed, at the present day, one wife frequently makes a man painfully sensible of the fact that nearly "*all is vanity.*"

Like all the rest, the Book of Canticles is anonymous and

without date. Besides this, it is, at best, only a collection of silly and obscene love songs, totally unfit to be found in the library of any decent person.

As I have already stated, the remaining sixteen books of the Old Testament claim to be the writings of the same number of poets or prophet. These writings will be fully analyzed in future lectures. For want of time, I can not analyze them now. Indeed in our present investigation, they are of very little importance. The Jewish religion, being fully established before any of them were written, does not, in any manner, depend upon them. Besides this, they always were rejected as worthless by the great body of the Hebrews themselves. Only two tribes ever did accept them as genuine scriptures; and even these tribes were far from unanimous in thus accepting them.

I have now briefly, but, as I think, clearly, shown that thirty-three of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament are either of no importance in our present discussion, or are totally destitute of any claim to authenticity. Indeed, by ten whole tribes of the Hebrews, and by a portion of the remaining two tribes, these thirty-three books, and the Book of Joshua always were rejected. As an entire people, the Hebrews never did accept any portion of the whole Bible except the Pentateuch, and to this, and the Book of Joshua, I now return.

As you are doubtless all aware, the Jewish, the Christian, and the Mohammedan religions, all depend upon the authenticity of the Pentateuch. We would naturally expect, therefore, that, however widely they might differ in regard to other matters, the theologians of all these sects, conscious of a common necessity, would unite in the most herculean efforts to make the ignorant masses believe that the Pentateuch is authentic. This the theologians have done. While mutually, and perhaps justly, charging one another with being "*liars*," "*impostors*," "*forgers*," "*mouth-pieces of hell*," etc.; while mutually, and "for the

love of God," inflicting upon one another tortures at the sight of which the foulest fiends of hell would stand aghast, these so-called holy men—these self-constituted teachers of the people, and interpreters of God's Holy Word—these pretended servants of the merciful Jesus—these intolerant bigots, their hands reeking with human blood, have united, like loving brothers, to deceive the people, and to make them believe that the Pentateuch was written by a responsible person, and that, consequently, it must be the "inspired Word of God."

Most of these theologians have assumed that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. They all equally fail, however, to produce any proof that such was the fact. Almost the only argument ever advanced by any of them, in support of this assumption, is that most other theologians have made the same assumption, and that, without having these books written several centuries after his time, no man, more suitable than Moses, can be fixed upon as their probable author. To thus attempt, however, to prove the correctness of an assumption by the extent of that same assumption, is, at best, only a pitiful begging of the question. As reasonably might we attempt to prove the correctness of ignorance upon any subject by calling attention to the amount of ignorance that prevails among men upon that same subject. A thousand persons might all assume that the moon was made of green cheese, and yet the numbers of the assumers would not, in the least, strengthen the assumption. Through ignorance, more than half the people of the world, at the present time, assume that the earth is flat and stationary; and yet the extent of that ignorance does not, in the least, tend to prove the correctness of that assumption. So the extent of the ignorance that prevails among men, in regard to the authorship of the Pentateuch, does not, in the least, tend to prove the correctness of the assumption that Moses is entitled to the honor of that authorship. On any other subject, an intelligent school-boy would be ashamed to

resort to the sophistry in which theologians indulge on this subject. This species of sophistry is especially objectionable, too, when, as in the present case, it is used by deeply interested parties. The common interest of theologians in this matter is sufficient to account for their common assumption.

If a mere assumption, even when made by a great number of persons, were any proof at all of its own correctness, then, on the mere assumption of its own advocates, the truth of every religion in the world would be fully established. So would be the doctrine of a flat and stationary earth, which is supported by a thousand times more assumers than is the assumption that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. By proving too much, therefore, by their sophistry, our theologians ruin their own cause.

Having thus shown the fallacy of the only argument by which theologians have ever attempted to fix the authorship of the Pentateuch upon Moses, I will now proceed to prove, by far better arguments, that he was not the author of those books, and that they were not written at all till several centuries after his death.

In the first place, then, outside of the very books whose authenticity we are calling in question, we have no proof at all that there ever was any such man as Moses. He may have been, and probably was, simply a mythological character, such as existed in all ancient nations. Admitting, however, that he was a real personage, I challenge my opponents to point out, in the whole Pentateuch, one single passage from which we can, with safety, even infer that he was its author. I can find no such passage. I can, however, find many passages which he could not possibly have written, and which, consequently, prove beyond all possible contradiction that he was not the author of the books of which they constitute an essential part.

Previous to the invention of papyrus—about one thousand years after the time at which Moses is said to have lived—all writings were engraved upon plates of stone, of

clay, or of some other hard and solid material. On account of the cumbrousness of these materials, and the slowness of engraving upon them, no extensive books, like the Pentateuch, were then ever written. Even with God's direct personal assistance, Moses is represented as having been constantly engaged, for forty days, engraving the ten commandments upon two plates of stone. At the same rate, to have engraved the whole Pentateuch would have required more years than Moses lived; and then, after it was engraved, the stone plates containing it would have been sufficient to load a large ship, and could not have been carried about, by the Hebrews, from one place to another, in their wanderings. Besides this, a book engraved upon such material could not have been lost, in the house of the Lord, as we are elsewhere assured that "the book of the Law"—which was evidently the Pentateuch, or, at least, a part of it—was lost, many centuries afterwards. These same difficulties would also have been met by any of the successors of Moses, until after the invention of papyrus. It is certain, then, that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, and that it is a far more recent production than our theologians would fain have us believe. Who, then, did write it, and what proof have we that it is the inspired Word of God?

In the Book of Genesis, the name of Moses is not mentioned at all. In the other four books of the Pentateuch, the name is constantly used in the third person. This is exactly the way in which another person would have spoken of Moses. It is not the way, however, in which Moses would have been likely to speak of himself. It is a well-known fact that not one writer in a hundred has ever chosen to habitually speak of himself in the third person. This fact alone, then, renders it at least a hundred times more probable that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, than it is that he did write it. This, indeed, would be true if, for the authorship of these books, the contest lay between himself and only one other person. Since, however, contem-

porary with Moses, there were probably a hundred men as capable of writing books as was he, his chance to have been the author of the books in question reduces to only one in ten thousand.

In Num. xii, 3, we read: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." Would one serious author in ten thousand write of himself in this vainglorious manner? If not, then to Moses is left only one chance in a hundred million to have been the author of the books in question. Is it safe, then, to assume that he was their author?

If Moses had written the passage which I have quoted, would not his assertion of his own great meekness have been a disgusting lie? In thus boasting of his own meekness, would he not have displayed a trait of character exactly the opposite of meekness? Could he ever, in this manner, have proved to his followers that he was, in very deed, the meekest man "upon the face of the earth?" Would he not, on the contrary, by such extravagant self-adulation, have proved to them that, "above all the men which were upon the face of the earth," he was the most utterly shameless braggart? Would a book written concerning his own exploits, and his own excellence, by so vain and so shameless a person, be worthy of our belief? What would the companions of Moses have thought of him, if he had, in this shameless manner, boasted of his own meekness? Would he have used any better logic than was used by a certain bloodthirsty Frenchman, who proposed to prove that he was an *extremely kind-hearted* man, by *cutting the throats* of all who dared to *doubt* that he *was so*? Can any really intelligent person, then, truly believe that Moses himself did thus write his own extravagant praises?

In Ex. xxxviii, 8, we read of "looking-glasses." But what could Moses have known of these, when they were not invented till over two thousand years after his death? Can you believe that he wrote this passage?

In Gen. xiv, 14, we read that Abraham chased certain enemies "unto Dan." Could a city be thus mentioned by name before there was any such city? If not, then the Book of Genesis could not have been written till after the building of the city of Dan. This would place the writing of the book over three hundred years after the death of Moses.

In Judges xviii, 27-29, we learn that the Danites took and destroyed a city called Laish, and, in its stead, built a new city, which, in honor of the father of their tribe, they called Dan. The account of this affair follows, in regular historical order, after the account of the death of Samson, who, according to Bible chronology, died some three hundred and thirty years after the death of Moses. We know that the Book of Genesis could not have been written till after this time; but how long afterwards, we have no certain means of determining. It may have been many centuries. In any view of the case, it is certain that Moses could not have written, and, consequently, did not write this book. It is also equally certain that we know nothing at all of the character for truthfulness of the unknown person who did write it. Can any reasonable person, then, pretend that this book has any just claim to be regarded as the inspired Word of God? Cannot much better proofs be adduced in favor of this pre-eminence for the Koran, or the Book of Mormon?

In Gen. xxxvi, 31, we read, "And these are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." This could not have been written until after kings had begun to reign over the children of Israel. According to Bible chronology, this would put the writing of the Book of Genesis several centuries after the death of Moses. Here, then, we have another positive proof that Moses did not write this book.

The author of Chronicles, professedly writing after kings had begun to reign over the children of Israel, could, and did, very properly, speak of these things. Indeed, by ref-

erence to 1 Chron. i, 43-54, we learn that he used, not only the very passage which I have quoted, but also the next twelve verses of the same chapter of Genesis. Now it is evident that these twelve verses, appearing thus in both Genesis and Chronicles, must either have been written in both books by the same person, or else have been copied by some other person, from the book in which they first appeared, into that which appeared at a later date. It is quite probable that both books were written by the same person—Genesis as an ancient, and Chronicles as a more modern, history of the Hebrews. Be all this as it may, however, it is certain that the verses in question could not have been written in either of these books until after kings had begun to reign over the children of Israel, some four hundred years after the death of Moses.

In Gen. xii, 6, we read, "And the Canaanite was then in the land." This must have been written after the Canaanite had ceased to be "in the land." On any other hypothesis, the language would be grossly absurd. As well might we, in speaking of some recent event, say that, at the time it occurred, the Mississippi River flowed into the Gulf of Mexico. You can all perceive that this language would be extremely absurd, if used while the Mississippi continues to flow into the Gulf of Mexico. Should the course of the Mississippi ever be so changed, however, that it ceased to flow into the Gulf of Mexico, then an author, speaking of events that occurred previous to that change, could very properly say that the Mississippi then flowed into the Gulf of Mexico. So of the language quoted from Genesis. It could not have been used till the Canaanite had ceased to be in the land. According to the Bible account, however, the Canaanite did not cease to be in the land until the time of David. This again places the writing of the book of Genesis several centuries after the death of Moses, and, by so doing, proves that he was not its author. Who, then, did write this book, and what do we know of that writer's character for veracity and intelligence?

In Ex. xvi, 35, we read, "And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna until they came into the borders of the land of Canaan." This language could not have been written until after the children of Israel had come into the borders of the land of Canaan, and after they had ceased to eat manna. From Josh. v, 12, however, we learn that these events did not occur until some time after the death of Moses. In this passage, then, we have proof positive that Moses did not write the Book of Exodus. Will the champions of the Bible, therefore, be so kind as to inform us who did write it, and what they know of his character for veracity?

In Num. xv, 32, we read, "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day." This language could not have been written until after the children of Israel had ceased to be "in the wilderness." Moses, therefore, who died while the children of Israel were still in the wilderness, could not possibly have been the author of Numbers, of which this passage constitutes an essential part. Who, then, did write it?

In Deut. i, 1-5, the author, in quite a dramatic style, introduces Moses upon the rostrum, and has him deliver several fearfully long orations. These orations are given in full, and constitute by far the greater portion of the whole book. Between these orations, the author puts in a few words of his own, and then has Moses lead off again. After the last of these orations is delivered, Moses is made to conclude his role, in this grand farce, by going up and dying all alone on the summit of Mount Pisgah. After describing the death, the burial, and the funeral of Moses, the author closes his book as follows: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which

Moses showed in the sight of all Israel." Since Moses could not himself have thus described his own death, his own burial, his own funeral, etc., and since he could not himself have delivered this extravagant post-mortem eulogy upon his own character, he could not possibly have been himself the author of the book of which the descriptions of these events constitute, as they do, an essential part.

From the language, "There arose not a prophet since in Israel," we learn that a long period of time had elapsed, after the death of Moses, before the book was written in which this language occurs. During that long period, many other prophets had arisen in Israel, and had distinguished themselves, but none of them had been "like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." If, at the time this language was used, a sufficiently long period after the death of Moses had not yet elapsed in which for many prophets to arise, and to prove themselves, the language in question would be grossly absurd.

These are only a few of the many incontrovertible evidences which I could adduce, to prove that Moses could not have been the author of the Pentateuch, and that it could not have been written till several centuries after his death. The proofs that I have given, however, must suffice. Indeed, they are sufficient to convince all but bigots and fools, and these could not be convinced by any amount of testimony.

In my notice of the Book of Joshua, I must be very brief. Most theologians have assumed that it was written by its own principal hero, Joshua himself. This assumption, however, as I shall now proceed to prove, is totally unwarrantable by the facts.

In the first place, then, there is not, in the whole book, a single passage that seems, in the least degree, to point to Joshua as its author. On the other hand, there are many passages in it which could not possibly have been written by Joshua. These passages contain the names of persons, places, and things, that did not exist, and men-

tions events that did not occur until after the death of Joshua. For want of time, I can notice only a few of these passages.

In Josh. xv, 63, we read, "The Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day." Since the children of Judah did not dwell at Jerusalem until the time of David, it is evident that the book that contains this passage could not have been written before the time of David. This would put the writing of the book several hundred years after the death of Joshua. Indeed, the peculiar force of the expression, "unto this day," proves that, at the time the book was written, a long time had elapsed since the children of Judah had taken Jerusalem, and had formed a portion of its inhabitants. The expression, "unto this day," is used, not with reference to years, but to ages. This places the writing of the book a long time after the time of David.

In Josh. xxiv, 29-31, we read: "And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being a hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath Serah, which is in Mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua." Since Joshua could not have written this account of his own death and burial, he evidently could not have been the author of the book of which this account forms an essential part. Indeed, since "all the elders that overlived Joshua" had passed away before the book was written, it is evident that the writing of it was not done for many years after the death of Joshua. When, and by whom, then, was it written?

Besides these, and many other similar passages, which Joshua could not have written, there are many other passages to be found in the book, which I do not think that he would have written. These are such as the following: "So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was noised

throughout all the country." "And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man." Dare you say that Joshua was so shameless a braggart as to use such language concerning himself? If not, and if you dare not claim that he described his own death and burial, and the conduct of the children of Israel during "all the days of the elders that overlived" him, how can you have the face to claim that he was the author of the book that bears his name?

Since we know nothing of the character for veracity of either the author of the Pentateuch, or of the author of the book of Joshua, we cannot know anything of the authenticity of either of these writings. To render this matter still worse, we have not a particle of evidence that there is now remaining, in these books, a single sentence as it was originally written by the unknown authors. On the other hand, as I shall show in my next lecture, we have abundance of evidence that these books have reached us through a thousand devious channels, through which it would be impossible for anything to reach us uncorrupted, no matter how pure it may have been in its original form. It is very probable that these books, as we now have them, are mere forgeries intended to deceive the people, and strengthen the cause of priestcraft. Should this prove to be, indeed, their true character, will we be damned if we do not believe them? Are my opponents absolutely certain that they may not be damned for believing and for ascribing to God, writings of so doubtful authenticity? For my own part, I believe that if anybody is to be damned, these intolerant bigots are the very parties that will have to undergo that interesting operation.

LECTURE SECOND.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.—(CONCLUDED).

IN 2 Chron. xxxiv, 14, 15, 18, 19, 30, we read: "And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah, the priest, found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses. And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small. And he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord."

Bible critics generally agree that "the book of the law," mentioned here, was the Pentateuch, or so much of it at least as was in existence at the time to which these extracts refer. That it was only a very small portion of the Pentateuch, as we now have it, is evident from the fact that the king, at a single reading, repeated "all the words" of it to the vast assemblage of people who came together to hear it. Be this as it may, however, we learn, from these extracts, that all there then was of the Word of God—of the only guide to salvation—had been carelessly thrown about and lost, by the very people whom God, in his infinite wisdom, had chosen to be its special custodians. We also learn, from these same extracts, that it had been lost for a great length of time—for so great a

length of time that the whole people, king, priests, Levites, and all, had entirely forgotten even the tradition of its former existence among them, and of the laws and the commandments which it contained. Indeed, we learn that it had been lost for so vast a number of years, or of ages, that, during its absence from among them, the people had entirely changed those most abiding of all institutions, their modes, their customs, their form of worship, and their gods.

Before this "book of the law" was lost, these modes, customs, etc., had all been in accordance with its provisions. When this was again found, however, as above related, all these things were found to be so entirely changed, so utterly at variance with the teachings of the book, that, upon hearing it read, the king, in great dismay, "rent his clothes"—good clothes, too, no doubt—and then immediately sent to "inquire of the Lord concerning the words of the book," and concerning the "curses" which he took it for granted that the Lord, in his fearful wrath, would be sure to "pour out upon" the whole land, because, during the immense time they were destitute of this precious book, the people, through no fault of their own, however, had ignorantly neglected to observe its provisions. Besides this, "the king, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small," men, women, and children, were so intensely excited, so utterly amazed, so fearfully alarmed, at the finding of this wonderful book, that, in order to hear it read, they all left their homes tenantless, and, by a common, a mighty, impulse, rushed in, from all directions, from far and near, "into the house of the Lord." And the king "read in their ears all the words of the book." Had there existed, among the people, even a tradition of such a book, and of its teachings, do you believe that the pretended finding of it, on this occasion, could possibly have created so unparalleled a commotion? This pretended finding of the book, then, is

a matter of great importance, and demands a correspondingly critical investigation.

From the fact that upon hearing the book read, the king so promptly sent to “inquire of the Lord concerning” it, we learn that the Lord could be inquired of, at pleasure, concerning such things. If, then, previous to that time, this book had ever existed, and if any record, or even any tradition, of its former existence remained among the Hebrews, why did not Hilkiah, or the king, or some other godly person, inquire of the Lord concerning it, and ascertain where it might be found? By simply making this very natural and very proper inquiry, these servants of the Lord—these guardians of religion—would have prevented the people from falling into error, through ignorance, and would thereby have rendered it entirely unnecessary for the king to tear his clothes, or for the Lord to “pour out” his “wrath” upon the people, and to bring upon the land “even all the curses that are written in the book.” Will my opponents, then, be so kind as to inform us why so simple and so important an inquiry was never made? Would it not have been just as easy to “inquire of the Lord,” concerning this book, before it was found, as it was to inquire of him afterwards? And why did not your infinitely wise, your infinitely good and merciful, God, even without being inquired of, inform the people where this precious book might be found? Had he also forgotten that there ever was any such book? He saw that, for want of the book, the people were erring through ignorance; and yet, although he could so easily have given it, he withheld from them all knowledge of the existence of the book, and of the curses contained therein. For being destitute of the knowledge which he alone could have given them, but which he thus withheld from them, he poured out his wrath and his curses upon them. Can my opponents reconcile this conduct with the character for justice and mercy which they ascribe to God?

After the book, by mere accident, had been found; after

his information on the subject of the book could be of no possible service to the people, then, and not till then, does God seem to have been pleased to commune with them in regard to it. So after he had irrevocably doomed the people to suffer his wrath and his curses, he very graciously informed them that he had thus doomed them, that he certainly would "pour out" his wrath upon them, and that he would do this because they had not observed certain laws and ceremonies, of the existence and the nature of which, he very well knew, they had never had any means of knowing.

It is said that, as a refinement of cruelty, one of the most bloody tyrants of Rome was wont to write edicts and have them posted in some high and inaccessible place in which it was impossible for them to be read by the people, and then to put to death such persons as he chose, because they had not observed these unknown, and, to them, unknowable edicts. This was certainly a detestable form of cruelty, and yet it was no worse than that which the Bible represents the Christian's God with having practiced on the occasion under consideration. What could be more blasphemous than are such representations of God?

Besides this, in 2 Kings xxiii, 2, we read: "And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord." This is certainly very plain language, and, of necessity, it is bound to be either true or false. If you admit that it is false, then you are bound to admit, also, that the whole story, of which it forms an essential part, is equally false. You are bound still further to admit that the entire two books, 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, of each of which this story forms an essential part, are, of necessity, totally unworthy of belief. If you make all these admissions, then the story becomes entirely unworthy of

further notice. If however, on the other hand, you claim that this language is true, then we have a right to ask you the following simple questions: How many people were there, at that time, "both small and great," in all Jerusalem and Judea? How large was the house of the Lord, in which they all assembled? and how large was the book, all the words of which the king read in the ears of all those people? These are fair questions. Will you please answer them?

According to the best historical light that we have on the subject, the entire population of Jerusalem and Judea, at the time of which we are speaking, could not have been less than four millions. Some writers estimate it at seven millions. The true number was probably about five millions. This is about the average of the estimates made by various historians and Bible critics. The population consisted of the entire tribes of Judah and Benjamin, considerable portions of each of the other ten tribes of Israel, and large numbers of Edomites and Jebusites who dwelt among the children of Israel. Long previous to this time, the tribe of Judah alone, according to the Bible account, contained "five hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword." The "valiant men that drew the sword" could not have composed more than one-fifth of the entire population of that tribe. Putting them at one-fifth, we have, for the tribe of Judah, at least two million five hundred thousand inhabitants, in the time of David, when the "men who drew the sword" were numbered; and between that time, and the time of which we are speaking, their numbers could not have grown less. Indeed, the country, during that period, having been generally in a prosperous condition, the number of inhabitants had, doubtless, greatly increased. At any rate, this powerful tribe, added to the tribe of Benjamin, the parts of the other ten tribes, the Edomites, and the Jebusites, must have contained a population of at least four millions. This would be equal to the entire population of London,

at the present time, and to four times the entire population of the City of New York. And yet, on pain of eternal damnation—whatever that may be—we are required to implicitly believe that “all” of this immense body of “people, both small and great, went up into the house of the Lord,” all at one time, to hear the reading of the wonderful book which Hilkiah, the priest, pretended that he had found. Rather than undergo that doubtful operation called damnation, let us try to believe this monstrous story. For standing-room, four millions of people would require several hundred acres of ground. Let us see, then whether we can find sufficient standing-room for them in “the house of the Lord.”

From the Bible account of this house, it was sixty cubits in length, twenty cubits in width, and thirty cubits in height. Allowing the cubit to have contained twenty-two inches—the most that has ever been claimed for it—we have that house one hundred and ten feet in length, thirty-six and two-thirds feet in width, and fifty-five feet in height. No one, I suppose, at the present day, will claim that, for a public building, this was a very large house. With the height of the house we have nothing to do. We can not suppose that the people were piled upon one another, or that, during the reading of the book in question, they even occupied different floors. In order to hear the reading, they must, of necessity, have all occupied the same floor. But how many could find standing-room upon that floor? Multiplying its length by its breadth, we have for its utmost area four thousand thirty-three and one-third square feet. In this calculation, we have made no deductions for the space occupied by the walls, by the pillars, by the altar, and by the various rooms which we are informed were partitioned off for special purposes. Making the necessary deductions for these, our available standing-room is reduced to less than three thousand square feet. Putting it at three thousand square feet, however, we have room for only two thousand

persons, or one two-thousandth part of all the people who are said to have assembled, on that occasion, in that house. In order to find room for them all, we must crowd at least one thousand three hundred and thirty-three persons on each square foot, or ten persons on each square inch.

It will not do to say that, on the occasion in question, only a *few* persons—only one out of every two thousand, “went up into the house of the Lord.” To say this, would be simply to give the lie to the author of the story, who positively declares that “*all the people, both small and great,*” went up. If, as you claimed at the outset, the author’s language be true, it is bound to be true as it now reads, and not as you, for obvious reasons, would gladly have it read. You must either accept it or reject it, as it now stands. If it be true, it needs no changing, no doctoring. If it be false, it could not be made true by any amount of changing or doctoring.

As I have already said, four million people, for standing-room, would require several hundred acres of ground. Admitting, then, that they did manage, somehow, to “all” go “up into the house of the Lord,” how did the king manage to read “in their ears all the words of the book” in question? Many of the people must have been more than half a mile distant from the reader. Unless several hundred thousand telephones were in operation on that occasion, how did he, from so great a distance, manage to “read in their ears?” Besides this, of how large a book, could he, on that single occasion, have “read all the words,” and read them, too, in tones sufficiently loud to be heard by so vast an audience? He certainly could not have read, and “all the people, both small and great,” certainly could not have stood to hear, any considerable portion of the Pentateuch, as we now have it. Since, then, there was not, at that time, any other “book of the law,” and since the book which, on that single occasion, he read entirely through, to an immense audience, could not, at

most, have contained more than a dozen ordinary chapters, we learn that by far the greater portion of the Pentateuch has been manufactured and added since that time. Your priests say that I will be damned if I do not believe that “the king and all the men of Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the Levites, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great,” went up, all on one occasion, into a hall that could not possibly contain more than three thousand persons. For my own part, however, I am free to say that—I’ll be d——d if I do believe this monstrous story. Why, the ears alone, of all these people, if they had been cut off, would have pretty well filled that “house of the Lord.”

By reading the whole chapter of which the foregoing extracts form a part, we learn that, for many years, Josiah, the king of Judah, had been most zealously engaged in the pious work of destroying the temples of the other gods, of cutting down their sacred groves, of breaking to pieces their images, of digging up and burning the bones of their deceased worshipers, of burning their living priests as sacrifices to his own God upon altars (see 2 Kings, xxiii, 20), and, in various other ways, of doing “that which was right in the sight of the Lord.” We also learn, however, that, notwithstanding all this his godly zeal, notwithstanding he had pleased God in all these things, this pious king had, nevertheless, utterly failed to observe the laws and the commandments which were contained in the book that Hilkiah pretended to have found. And why had the king thus failed? For the excellent reason that, previous to the pretended finding of this book, he was totally ignorant of the laws, etc., which it contained. Had he known those laws, etc., he certainly would have observed them. So soon as he did know them, he did observe them. Upon hearing the book read, he “rent his clothes” in dismay, “for,” said he, “great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this

book." Until he had heard the book read, he did not know that his fathers had not done according to all that was "written in the book." Neither did he know that "the wrath of the Lord" was about to be "poured out upon" himself and his people because of the shortcomings of their fathers. So soon, however, as he had heard the book read, he "stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it."

From all these things it must be evident that, until they had heard this book read, both the king and the people were utterly ignorant, not only of its contents, but, also, of its previous existence, if, indeed, it had ever had any previous existence. How are we to account for this utter and general ignorance in regard to so important a book? If that book had ever been in use among the people—if they had ever been governed by the laws that it contained, would not tradition, even after the book was lost, have preserved the memory of its existence and of the laws, etc., which it contained? Is it not evident, then, that the book had never before been in use among the people? Is it not evident, either that this whole story is a pure fabrication of a later date, or that the book was a forgery which Hilkiyah got up for the purpose of imposing on the people, and which, for obvious reasons, he pretended to have found? In either case, is not the Bible condemned? Indeed, admitting that Hilkiyah did actually find such a book, how could he know that it was the "book of the law of the Lord given by Moses," when, as we have seen, all knowledge, all tradition, of such a book, had been lost? How was Hilkiyah to know that some other priest had not made the book, and placed it in "the house of the Lord," on purpose to have it found? Does not history give an

account of a great number of similar book-finding impositions?

For my own part, I incline to the belief that the entire story is a pure fiction of a later date—that no such finding, or pretended finding, of a book ever occurred, I will therefore first give my reasons for inclining to this belief. I will then return, and, upon the hypothesis that this pretended book-finding did occur, I will try Hilkiah on a charge of forgery and imposture. I will also try Josiah on a charge of being either the willing accomplice, or the miserable dupe, of this forger and impostor.

Only a very few years after this pretended finding of “the book of the law,” the Jews were nearly all carried away to Babylon, where they remained in captivity for about eighty years. This is the Bible account of the affair, and, to some extent, this account seems to be corroborated by profane history. Most of these Jews seem, during their long captivity, to have lost their own nationality, and to have never returned to their own country. Of those who did return, and from whom the modern Jews are decended, the greater portion seem to have lost their own language, their own customs, and even their own religion, and to have adopted the language, the customs, and the religion of their masters, the Babylonians. Indeed, the Jews, having learned many useful arts, sciences, and religious doctrines of their more enlightened masters, seem never again to have become the ignorant and barbarous people that they had been before their long captivity. At the time of their return to Judea, they were so thoroughly Chaldeanized that, in order to understand their modes, customs, etc., after that time, we have simply to understand the modes, customs, etc., of the Chaldeans themselves. This fact is freely admitted by every one who is at all well acquainted with the respective histories of these two nations. For proofs, therefore, I will simply, refer you to Brown’s “Dictionary of the Bible,” to Bishop Marsh’s “Lectures,” and to the eighth chapter of the “Book

of Nehemiah." From these sources, you will learn that, when reading in Hebrew to the people, the priests were under the necessity of interpreting their readings, in order to make the people understand them.

According to the testimony of their own historians, as well as that of many Christian writers, the Jews, during this same period, entirely lost most, if not all, of their sacred books and other writings. All of these are admitted to have been burned, or otherwise totally destroyed. Whatever writings they may have had, therefore, immediately after their return to Judea, must have been very recent productions, prepared with special reference to the necessities of the returning captives.

As quoted by Dupin, St. Eucharius says: "It is evident why we have not remaining the books which the Holy Scriptures approve of, because Judea, having been ravaged by the Chaldeans, and the ancient bibliothèque being burnt, there remaining only a small number of the books which at present make up the Holy Scriptures, and which were collected and re-established by the care of Ezra." From this, it appears that "only a small number of the books which the Holy Scriptures approve of," are to be found in the Bible, as we now have it, that the balance have been manufactured, by unknown parties, since the Babylonish Captivity, and that by far the greater portion of "God's Holy Word"—of our only guide to salvation—is irretrievably lost. Our Bible being thus made up of "only a few books" of God's word, and many books of man's word, what are we to do with it? We do not know which books are the Word of God, and which are the word of man. Must we believe them all or be damned? Can the rejection of man's word subject us to damnation? Be this as it may, your priests teach us that a failure to believe any portion of God's word certainly will subject us to eternal damnation. But the greater portion of God's word being lost, we all, of necessity, fail to believe that portion. And are we all, on that account, to be damned? If not—

if believing only the small portion of God's word that is left, is sufficient to insure salvation, would the believing of a still less portion be equally sufficient? And would it not be well to lose nearly all the balance of God's Word, so that, having very little to believe, we would have comparatively little trouble in attaining salvation? If by believing only the small portion of God's Word which they have, and the still smaller portion of it which they ever read, my Christian friends are enabled to enter, with ease, through the gates of pearl, into the New Jerusalem, may it not be that poor Infidels, like myself, by believing a still smaller portion, may manage to squeeze in also, through those same beautiful gates? Indeed, is it certain that, in order to reach heaven, it is necessary to believe any portion of the so-called Holy Scripture? If, as is here admitted, the greater portion of the Holy Scriptures, without any detriment to the cause of salvation, have been totally lost, or rejected, why, I again ask, may not the remaining smaller portion, with equal impunity, be lost or rejected, in the same way? But I am digressing; I was to explain why I incline to the belief that the whole story of the finding of a book by Hilkiab was a pure fabrication of a later date.

As quoted by Simon, St. Chrysostom says: "The Jews having been at sometimes careless, and at others profane, they suffered some of the sacred books to be lost through their carelessness, and have burnt and destroyed others." From this, it appears that the Chaldeans were not the only ones who labored to rid the world of the so-called Word of God. It appears that the Jews themselves, appointed though they had been by an infinitely wise God, to be its sole custodians, joined with their pagan neighbors in the work of burning and otherwise destroying the books which they had been thus specially appointed to preserve. Is it likely, then, that, under these circumstances, any of the books in question survived?

Infinitely wise, indeed, your God must have been to

choose such a people as the Jews are here represented as having been to be the custodians of his Holy Word; to make the salvation or the damnation of the whole world depend upon the accidental losing or finding of the books containing this Word, by so careless a people, or upon its preservation or destruction by so profane a people! In thus acting, did he not make salvation almost an impossibility? When he intrusted these careless and profane Jews with his Holy Word, did he, or did he not, know what they would do with it? If he did not know, could he have been omniscient, as you represent him to be? If he did know, and then, with this knowledge before him, proceeded to appoint them, did he not intend that they should do just what they did? Did he not intend that the greater part, if not all, of his Holy Word—of our only guide to salvation—should be totally lost or destroyed, and never recovered? Did he not intend that the preservation of the remaining part—if, indeed, any part did remain—should depend on many mere accidents? Did he not intend to make our damnation almost an absolute certainty? And can such a being be infinite in wisdom, in goodness, and in mercy?

Whether God did, or did not, know what the Jews would do with the books which he intrusted to their care, and whether he did, or did not, intend that they should do with them just what they did, I leave for our priests to determine. I leave them also to determine whether he did, or did not, succeed in carrying out his own programme in regard to these books. If he did succeed, was not the burning and the losing of these books a part of that successfully carried out programme? If he did not succeed, why did he fail? Which of the elements of success did he lack, the knowledge, the will, or the power? And may not his present plan of salvation prove to be an equally total failure? Are my Christian friends absolutely certain that he will succeed in the difficult task of gathering them into heaven? Are they also absolutely

sure that he will succeed in keeping Mohammedans, Jews, pagans, and Infidels out of heaven?

Be all these things as they may, however, it is admitted, on all hands, that, during the Babylonish Captivity, the sacred books of the Jews were generally, if not universally, destroyed, and thus, for a time at least, totally lost. It is also admitted that many of these books—equally as authentic as any that we now have—were never recovered. Among these may be named the “Book of Jasher,” the “Book of the Wars of the Lord,” the “Book of Nathan the Prophet,” and the “Book of Gad the Seer.” Was God willing that all these books should be lost, or was he unable to preserve them?

In 2 Esdras xiv, 20–22, we read: “Behold, Lord, I will go, as thou hast commanded me, and reprove the people which are present; but they that shall be born afterward, who shall admonish them? thus the world is set in darkness, and they that dwell therein are without light. For thy law is burnt, therefore no man knoweth the things that are done of thee, or the works that shall begin. But if I have found grace before thee, send the Holy Ghost into me, and I shall write all that hath been done in the world since the beginning, which were written in thy law that men may find thy path, and that they which will live in the latter days may live.” From the first two verses of these extracts, it clearly appears that all the books had been burnt which contained the “law,” and which contained an account of “all that hath been done in the world since the beginning.” It appears that the world was entirely “set in darkness;” that they that dwelt therein were entirely “without light;” that of God’s Word all was lost. From the remaining verse we learn that Esdras, or Ezra, as he is usually called, lamenting the sad condition of “the world, set in darkness,” of the people, “without light,” proposed, with God’s assistance, to dissipate the darkness in which the world was set, and to restore the lost light to men, by writing, *de novo*, all that

had been written in the books that had been burnt. From the balance of the chapter we learn that he actually did carry out this proposition; that, professing to act under God's instructions, he employed five skillful scribes who, in forty days of constant writing, completed this great work in two hundred and four books, Ezra himself dictating the contents of them all.

In order to thus furnish, within forty days, the material with which to fill these two hundred and four books, Ezra must, of necessity, have been wonderfully inspired, or else must have drawn largely upon tradition, or upon his own imagination. The assumption of his inspiration, being a thing unreasonable in itself, and being entirely unsupported by proof, will hardly be accepted by any of those who make reason, science, and common sense their guides. The material for those books, therefore, must have been drawn principally, if not entirely, either from tradition or imagination, or from both. Of this material, thus obtained, the story of the finding of "the book of the law" by Hilkiah, after it had been lost on a former occasion, evidently formed a part. At any rate, there is nothing in the Bible to show that this story was ever told, until it was told by Ezra; and, since his two hundred and four books evidently contained a hundred times as much matter as did the one little "book of the law," which Josiah read entirely through at a single reading to an immense audience, it is undeniable that at least ninety-nine per cent of their contents were new material—material which had never been contained in "the book of the law," of which he claimed that his books were a reproduction. This gives us ninety-nine chances in a hundred that the story in question was a pure fabrication of Ezra's, founded, at best, on mere tradition.

You may object, however, that you do not accept as canonical the Book of Esdras, from which I have been quoting. In reply to this, I will say that, although you do not accept it, the majority of the Jews and the Chris-

tians of the world do accept it; and this is as much as can be said of any one book in the whole Bible; not a single book being universally accepted, by both Jews and Christians, or even by Christians alone, as either authentic or canonical. Besides this, even those Christian writers who do not recognize the canonicity of the book in question, nevertheless admit that it contains much correct and valuable information, and that it is entitled to a much higher degree of credit than are the writings of any purely profane historians. Be all this as it may, however, it is now universally admitted that the particular information which I have drawn from this book is correct; that, during the Babylonish Captivity, the original books, whether many or few, of the Holy Scriptures, were generally if not universally destroyed; and that what we now have of them were reproduced by Ezra the scribe. Admitting, then, that none of the books which now compose the Old Testament were written after Ezra's time, and that, through a thousand doubtful channels, they have all reached our own time without corruption, they still rest upon no higher authority than the entirely unsupported word of their author—their pretended reproducer, that deeply interested party, Ezra the scribe. How are we to know, then, that, in this work, he was inspired of God? His own unsupported word to that effect is not sufficient, since every religious impostor sets up the very same claim for himself when producing his so-called sacred books. How are we to know that Ezra correctly reproduced any portion of the books that had been burnt? How was even Ezra himself to know that his books were correct reproductions of books which he had never seen, and of whose contents he had no knowledge? When professedly describing long-past and long-forgotten events, how was he to know whether his ideas concerning them were the result of inspiration or of imagination? Who can answer these fair questions?

Admitting, however, that Ezra did correctly reproduce

the lost Scriptures in question, he did so in two hundred and four books; and since we have less than one-fifth of that number now remaining, we cannot claim to be in possession of more than one-fifth of the real Bible—of man's only guide to salvation. Can we be fully saved without believing the other four-fifths? Can one-fifth lead us to more than one-fifth of that which constitutes salvation? If it can—if, without at all injuring our chances for heaven, we can dispense with four-fifths of God's word—why may we not, with equal impunity, dispense with the one-fifth that remains? If the loss of God's Word is no misfortune, can its possession be of any benefit?

As to what became of the greater portion of the books written by dictation of Ezra, we do not certainly know. So far as history can enable us to know anything, however, of times so remote, we do know that the books of the Old Testament were never collected into a single book or Bible, till the time of the Maccabees, about two hundred years after Ezra, and as many before Christ. Previous to that time, all of these books, as well as all of the other so-called sacred books of the Jews, seem to have been scattered about, liable, at any time, to be lost or destroyed, as such books were wont to be in those days, or corrupted, beyond all recognition, by designing priests, incompetent copyists, etc. And what was the natural, the inevitable result of this condition of things? More than four-fifths of these Ezraic books are admitted to have been irrecoverably lost; and the purity of the balance is admitted to be extremely doubtful.

During the two hundred years, or more, that intervened between the time of Ezra and the time of the compilation of the Bible, there appeared among the people a great number of new books. Some of these books seem to have been from the pens of quite able writers, and though many of them conflicted with the Ezraic books, and with one another, the author of each claimed to have

written it under inspiration, and gave just as good proof of his inspiration as Ezra gave of his. These facts are freely admitted by all those who are well posted in the history of the Jews of that time. From this vast number of books, then, all claiming to be the Word of God, but most of them undeniably spurious, the Sanhedrim who met to compile the Bible, had to make their selections. This they did in business-like manner, voting one book to be authentic and canonical, another to be a base forgery, without going to the trouble of even claiming that they were aided in this work by that wonderfully convenient priestly invention, the "Holy Ghost."

And now, let me ask, what proof have you that any of the books placed before that Sanhedrim were inspired of God? You know that you can produce no proof at all. On the other hand, I can produce positive proof that none of them was so inspired. In future lectures, I will give this proof by demonstrating that there never existed any such being as God. Admitting, however, for the present, that some of those books were inspired, what proof have you that the totally uninspired members of that Sanhedrim either could, or did, unerringly distinguish between these and the equally well-written spurious books with which they were commingled? What proof have you that any of the inspired books were selected? You merely guess that some of the books in question were inspired; and then guess that, without any inspiration to guide them, that Sanhedrim selected the inspired books. But is it safe to stake the eternal salvation of your soul on the result of two mere guesses? And is it fair to consign me and millions more good, honest, and intelligent men to the eternal fires of hell simply because we cannot accept your guesses as good evidence?

What proof have you that the Sanhedrim in question did not, without further examination, pronounce those books to be canonical which most nearly coincided with their own opinions, and reject, as spurious, those that

most widely differed from their own opinions? Would it not have been very natural for uninspired men to take this course? Could we expect such men to reject books whose teachings they did like, and did believe, and to select books whose teachings they did not like, and did not believe? What have we, then, at best, in the books of the Old Testament, but the favorite opinions of a small body of uninspired men? And would not those men be almost sure to find their own peculiar opinions more nearly taught in the more recent writings; in the writings which were produced in times more nearly like their own, and by men more nearly like themselves?

From all this, is it not extremely probably that, in order to subserve their own selfish interests, our priests have misled us into staking the eternal salvation of our souls upon a collection of spurious writings? Think of this, ye blind, intolerant, Christian bigots, and tell us how you know that any of the books of the Old Testament are the Word of God!

What do you know of the character for honesty of the men who composed that Sanhedrim? Did not most of them, if not all, belong to the priesthood? And were not the Jewish priests the professional politicians, the most notorious and unscrupulous political tricksters and wire-pullers of that nation? How was it with the Jewish priests in Christ's time? Did they accept the true, and reject the false? Did they appear to be great lovers of truth and justice? Did they not, on the contrary, appear stubbornly bent upon subserving, by any means, their own interests? And were the priests of that time any worse than were the priests at the time of which we are speaking? Were not selfishness and sectarian bigotry always prominent traits among them? And do you know that those who compiled the Old Testament were any better than the balance? Does not the Talmud—the very highest authority on this subject—admit that this Sanhedrim did make such changes as they deemed neces-

sary in order to bring about harmony among the books which they proposed to canonize and retain?

Let us, however, for a moment, admit, that, from among so many spurious writings, that Sanhedrim, all uninspired though they were, did, nevertheless, unerringly select only the genuine writings of Ezra. Let us also admit that, through the hands of a thousand dishonest priests and unskillful copyists, the selections then made have come down unchanged and uncorrupted to our own time. Then, before staking our eternal salvation upon their teachings, it becomes our duty, as reasonable beings, to ascertain, if possible, just what may be the value of those Ezraic writings. To some extent, we have already ascertained this value. We will ascertain more as we proceed.

Our priests tell us that to doubt that these books are the "Word of God" will certainly subject us to eternal burnings in fire and brimstone. For the priests, this is a very convenient argument; and upon the ignorant it is a very effective one. The intelligent, however, wish some proof that these books are the "Word of God" and that to doubt their being so involves eternal torments. Let our priests give us these proofs, and we ask no more.

As I have already proved, the various books of the Old Testament bear indubitable marks of a much more recent origin than is usually assigned to them. Many of these marks go to prove that the books which contain them could not have been written at an earlier date than the time of Ezra, or about four hundred years before the beginning of the Christian era. Among these marks may be named the fact that many of the fundamental ideas contained in these books were of Chaldaic origin. Thus, the ideas of a six-days' creation, a single pair of human beings, a Garden of Eden, a speaking serpent, a fall of man, a general deluge, and many other things, were certainly borrowed from the Chaldeans—from the Gahans of Zoroaster. Since, then, these ideas could hardly have

been obtained, and engrafted upon the religion of the Hebrews, before the Babylonish Captivity, we have, in this matter, almost positive proof that the Pentateuch—or at least the book of Genesis, which is founded upon these ideas, was not written before the time of that captivity. Indeed, the Jews must have been a long time in captivity, and must have become, to a great extent, reconciled to their condition, before they would thus engraft upon their own religion these ideas of their masters; and since Ezra was the only able Jewish writer of that period, we may, with safety, fix upon him as the author of the books in which these ideas are expressed. In this conclusion, we are sustained by the Talmudists, and also by many other Jewish authors. The Christian father, St. Jerome, likewise admits that Ezra was the author of these books. The Talmud expressly declares that, for the names of their angels, and even for those of their months, the Jews were indebted to the Chaldeans. All those books, then, in which months and angels are mentioned, must have been written after the Jews came into intimate contact with the Chaldeans; that is, after the Babylonish Captivity. When, in addition to all these things, we add the important fact that no writer, previous to Ezra's time, makes the slightest mention of any of these books, are we not fully justified in our conclusion that he was their real author, and not their reproducer?

It is a well-known fact that, in order to inspire the people with reverence for their so-called sacred books, the priests of all ages and of all religions have been obliged to claim for their respective books the prestige of a great antiquity. Few men would accept, as of divine origin, a book which they knew had been written in their own time, and by one of their own neighbors. Ezra could not have been ignorant of this fact. We would naturally expect him, therefore, to act just as he did; to set up for books, entirely his own, this inevitable priestly claim of great antiquity.

Unfortunately for Ezra, however, he was unacquainted with the art so convenient to priests, and so much practiced by them since his time of finding ancient books inscribed on plates of brass or other durable material. Joseph Smith, of our own time, and of our own country, was more fortunate. All he had to do was to *find* a sacred book, and this feat could be performed by any person possessed of a good degree of cunning. Ezra proceeded in a different manner. He composed certain books, and then claimed that these, his own original productions, were the inspired reproductions of books that had long been lost or destroyed. In doing this, however, he unwarily left, as we have seen, many marks by which his imposition could be and has been detected. He made use of names, of ideas, and of modes of speech which were common in his own time, but which were entirely unknown in the times to which he refers his books. He also makes his pretended ancient writers describe customs that did not exist, and events that did not occur, till many centuries after the times in which themselves are respectively described as having lived.

If, however, in the face of all these damaging facts, it still be claimed that the books which Ezra professed to reproduce actually did exist previous to the Babylonish Captivity, and that, after they had been long lost and their contents forgotten, he actually did correctly reproduce them, then it becomes our duty to ascertain, if possible what may have been the value of those books, as they originally existed. In order to determine this matter, therefore, we will now return to Hilkiah, whom I promised to bring to trial on a charge of forgery. He was Ezra's great-grandfather, and was high priest of the Jews just before they were carried away to Babylon. By virtue of his office, therefore, he had charge of all the records, and of all the sacred books of the nation. Let us see whether he did, or did not, honestly perform the duties of his office.

If he actually did exhibit what he called "the book of the law," and if, by so doing, he actually did create, among the people, so unparalleled an excitement as is pretended, then it becomes our duty to inquire whether that book really had once been in use among the people, and really had been lost, or whether it was simply a book which, to further his own purposes, he had himself forged, and which, to conceal his crime and to deceive the people, he pretended to have "found in the house of the Lord." That the book was undoubtedly a forgery, I will now proceed to prove.

In the the first place, then, there is something suspicious in the circumstance that the book should have been found by a *priest*. This was according to the usual course of priestcraft. Strangely enough, all the sacred books of the world, that have ever been *found*, have been found by *priests*; and all, that have ever been received directly from heaven, have been received by *priests*. There is also something suspicious in the circumstance that, in this case, as in all others of the kind, the book which was found should *happen* to contain the *favorite doctrines* of the *very priest* who *found* it. Without fear of successful contradiction, I assert that no priest ever did *find*, or *receive* from *heaven*, a book whose teachings were at *variance* with his *own preconceived opinions*. In all cases of this kind, the book has always happened to *confirm*, never to *change*, the *previous opinions* of the *very priest* who *happens* to *find* or to *receive* it. A Mohammedan priest, for instance, never happens to find, or to receive from heaven, any book whose teachings condemn Mohammedanism. So a Christian priest never happens to find, or to receive from heaven, a book whose teachings condemn Christianity. And so in all other cases. The parties who happen to find the books, or to receive them from heaven, always *happen* to *find*, or to *receive*, just such books as they respectively *happen* to *want*.

There is likewise something suspicious in the circum-

stance that, in this case, as in all others of the kind, the book happened to be found by the very priest whose personal interest and schemes of ambition it was specially calculated to promote. This, again, was according to the usual course of priestcraft. No priest ever did, or ever will, either find, or receive from heaven, a book whose teachings are calculated to thwart his own schemes of ambition, and to promote those of some rival priest. The book always happens to provide, in a special manner, for the promotion of the very priest who happens to find or to receive it. Moses, Hilkiah, Ezra, Mohammed, Joseph Smith, and a thousand other ambitious and deeply-interested priests each happened to find, or to receive from heaven, the very book whose teachings were specially calculated to elevate himself to wealth, to power, to honor, to fame—to all that a selfish and ambitious priest could desire. Unfortunately for our faith in these things, no book has ever happened to be found, or to be received from heaven, by an unselfish, disinterested, and unambitious party.

As I have already stated, Hilkiah, at the time of which I am speaking, was high priest of the Jews. Besides this, he was virtually their ruler; the king, Josiah, being a mere youth, and a pliant instrument in the hands of this wily, ambitious, unscrupulous, and bloodthirsty priest. According to the Bible account, Hilkiah and the king, at that very time, were engaged in a war of extermination against a powerful sect who differed from them in religious opinions; and so unrelenting in their persecutions were these two godly cutthroats—so unremitting were they in their efforts to do “that which was right in the sight of the Lord,” that they not only burnt the living priests of that other sect upon altars, as sacrifices to God, but also, like ghouls, went down into the graves, and dragged out and burnt, upon the same horrible altars, and as sacrifices to the same horrible God, the decaying bodies of the silent and helpless dead. To have been

beaten, then, after the perpetration of these monstrous acts of piety, would have been themselves to suffer the most fearful punishments that their deeply-wronged and intensely exasperated enemies could inflict upon them.

Under such circumstances, it was very natural that Hilkiah and the king should make desperate efforts to insure success. As to any moral scruples, in regard to the means of securing success, they could not have had any. This fact is evident from the worse than fiendish manner in which they were wont to treat both the living and the dead of those who happened to differ from them in religious opinions. With these men to succeed by any means, however foul, was to do "that which was right in the sight of the Lord." They could insure success, however, only by bringing to bear some powerful influence upon the minds of the ignorant masses; and such an influence could be exercised only by bringing to bear upon the minds of the people something in the form of religion; something that to them would seem to come with the authority of God himself.

Even among his own sect, there would inevitably be a large body of the more intelligent and humane classes of the people who would seriously question Hilkiah's right to act as he was acting. This would be especially the case with those whose friends and relatives he had so ruthlessly butchered. These conservative parties would naturally demand of Hilkiah the *authority* by which he did all these things. And he would have to show some authority higher than that of his own will; higher, indeed, than any that could be given to him by his instrument, the young king. He would have to show that his authority came from "on high." But how was he to show this? According to the Bible account, he had no "book of the law" containing such authority. He had nothing at all to show that he was commissioned by God to do these things. If he only had such a book, he would be safe enough. The people of his own sect would never

think of such a thing as questioning the express command of their own God.

Under these circumstances, Hilkiah was compelled to have a "book of the law of the Lord" which would fully authorize him to do all that he was doing. But how was he to obtain such a book? To have openly written one himself would evidently have proved a failure. To have pretended that he wrote it under inspiration would have helped him but little. Those who were most seriously opposed to his course of conduct would not have been at all likely to accept his own unsupported testimony in favor of his own inspiration. This would have been especially the case when they came to see that he had written himself a commission to perform the very deeds the propriety of which they were calling in question. And yet, in order to be of any service to him, the book had to authorize the commission of these very deeds. Under these desperate circumstances, he had no alternative. He had to *find* a book, and — he "*found*" it. In order to *find* it, however, he had first to *make* it, and then have it *lost*. Thus you see that the finding of this book was far more probably the result of a necessity, of a trick, than of an accident.

Whether Hilkiah in person found the book, or whether it was found and placed in his hands by one of his workmen, we are not informed. It would certainly have been in better taste to have had it found by one of his workmen who was entirely ignorant of the plot according to which it was to be found. That it was found by some of the workmen, and that these workmen were parties to the plot, appears extremely probable from the fact, as stated in the story itself, that, without even counting the money, Hilkiah emptied the entire treasury of "the house of the Lord" into the hands of those workmen. Of itself, this was a very suspicious proceeding. Business men, and especially Jews, are not wont, in honest transactions, to thus pour out, uncounted, vast sums of money into the

hands of their workmen. From the fact, then, that Hilkiah, on that occasion, did thus pour out the public money, uncounted, into the hands of the workmen who were cleaning out and repairing "the house of the Lord," it is evident that he was not paying them for any ordinary or honest services. The correctness of this conclusion is confirmed by the fact that the book in question came into his hands at the very time and the very place at which he made this extravagant payment. Can these several facts be accounted for on any other reasonable hypothesis than that those workmen were bribed to act their part in a base imposition? The affair becomes still more clearly a fraudulent one, when we take into consideration the fact that all those workmen were especially selected by Hilkiah himself and the king. In a fraudulent affair, such a selection was not only natural, but absolutely necessary. None but carefully selected men could have been safely trusted as participants in such a transaction. Had the affair been an honest one, the selecting of the common workmen would doubtless have been left to the head workmen, who alone would have been selected by Hilkiah and the king.

Whether the king was Hilkiah's accomplice, in this iniquitous affair, or only his miserable dupe, does not sufficiently appear. Several facts, however, connected with the case, render it more probable that he was a willing and wicked accomplice. In the first place, Hilkiah could not have hoped to succeed in such an undertaking, without the hearty co-operation of the king, and this could be secured only by taking him fully into the whole secret. That he would make a safe and efficient accomplice, in so infamous an undertaking, was evident from the fact that he was already fully proved to be a thorough religious bigot and fanatic; and from the fact that, for ten years, he and Hilkiah had been harmoniously carrying on together their favorite occupation of butchering men, women, and children who differed from them in opinion; of burning liv-

ing men upon altars as sacrifices to their God; of revengefully digging up and burning the bodies of the dead; and of generally doing "that which was right in the sight of the Lord." Besides this, the king and Hilkiah had a common interest in the finding of the book.

The king being thus a safe, an efficient, and a necessary person for the part which he was required to act, Hilkiah would undoubtedly take him in as a full accomplice in this infamous affair. That he was thus taken in and that he acted a prepared part, is evident from the manner in which he acted after the book was "found." Instead of carefully examining the book, and inquiring into the circumstances under which it was "found," he simply heard a portion of it read, and then, in a most theatrical manner, "rent his clothes," and declared that "this book" was "the word of the Lord." If he had not been simply playing a prepared part, would he have acted in this manner? Was not such conduct, especially in a king, by far too prompt, and too theatrical, to be natural and unpremeditated? Could he, without any examination whatever of the book, be really so certain as he professed to be, that it was "the word of the Lord?" Was he so expert in the Lord's peculiar style of expression, that, upon merely hearing a few paragraphs read, he could, with absolute certainty, declare that the language was that of the Lord? Can there be any reasonable doubt that he was acting a prepared part?

If, at the present time, some priest should pretend to find a book of similarly high pretensions, and, if he should have a small portion of it read to D'Israeli, to Bismarck, to Emperor William, to the czar of Russia, or to the president of France, or of the United States, do you suppose that the party hearing the reading would, so promptly as did Josiah, tear his new clothes, and declare the book to be "the word of the Lord?" Would not any one of the parties named—would not any intelligent person of the present time, before thus tearing his clothes and pronouncing the

new-found book to be "the word of the Lord," first carefully examine the book itself, and also the circumstances under which it was said to have been found? And if, without the slightest examination into the matter, one of these parties should, as did Josiah, promptly, and theatrically, tear his clothes and declare that the book was "the word of the Lord," of what value, in the eyes of intelligent persons, would be his declaration, thus ignorantly, imprudently, and theatrically made? How exceedingly ridiculous does such a proceeding appear, when supposed to be enacted by some great statesman or ruler of our own time, and of our own country! And is it any the less ridiculous, when supposed to have been enacted by a great ruler, in a time and a country distant from our own? When will the priest-blinded masses learn to exercise, upon such subjects, a little reason and common sense?

Another proof that this whole affair was a base imposition, and that the king and Hilkiah were accomplices in that imposition, is found in the fact that, after hearing a portion of the book read, and after declaring it to be "the word of the Lord," the king appointed certain men to inquire of the Lord concerning it. In order that they might make this inquiry, and get the answer which he wanted, he had them go to an obscure woman who was never heard of on any other occasion. If he had really wished to obtain a genuine communication from the Lord, why did he seek it through a woman who was so utterly unknown that her place of residence had to be described? Why did he not seek it through the renowned prophet Jeremiah, who was then living right there in the city, and whose responses from the Lord would undeniably have had far greater weight with the people than had those of the obscure woman in question? The reason why the woman was consulted, in preference to Jeremiah, is very obvious. It is simply because the plotters could *use* the woman as their *instrument*, while they could not thus *use* Jeremiah.

If there ever was an honest prophet, Jeremiah seems to

have been that one. He would doubtless have scorned to give Hilkiah and the king any aid or encouragement in their infamous imposition. At any rate, being himself a star actor on the Lord's stage, he would certainly not have condescended to act a secondary part in the play of Hil-
kiah, his great rival. Being himself an ambitious man, he would never have aided a rival to rise above himself. Hil-
kiah knew better than to take such a man into his confidence.

"But why," you ask, "did not Jeremiah expose the wickedness of these two godly impostors, Josiah and Hil-
kiah?" To this I reply, that to have done so in a bold and open manner would have been to insure his own destruction. One of these impostors was his king; the other was his high priest. He was in their power, and he knew that they wished for a pretext to destroy him. Indeed, because he always opposed the wicked doings of the priest-
hood, of whom Hilkiah was the head, he was soon after thrown into a dungeon, and treated with great cruelty. In as plain language as he dared use, he did expose the corruption of these two wicked men, and of their wicked associates. In Jer. vi, 13, 28, we read: "For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness: and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely. They are all grievous revolvers, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters." This was written of the whole Jewish people, just after the pretended finding of "the book of the law," and while Josiah and Hil-
kiah were both still living. These two arch-impostors, therefore, were certainly included among those who were "covetous," who dealt "falsely," who were "grievous revolvers," who were "brass and iron," who were "corrupters," etc. Would you have the expose couched in stronger language?

In Jer. i, 1, we learn that Jeremiah was "the son of Hil-
kiah." Whether this Hilkiah was or was not the Hil-
kiah of whom we have been speaking, I cannot certainly say.

If he was, this fact would be an additional reason why Jeremiah did not more directly expose Hilkiah's imposition. He would not like to expose the wickedness of his own father.

Besides Jeremiah, there was also in Jerusalem, or at least in Judea, at the time of which we are speaking, another famous prophet, Zephaniah, whose responses from the Lord would, doubtless, have had greater weight with the people than had those of the obscure woman in question. Why was not he consulted? Simply because he, too, had a mind of his own, and was opposed to wicked impositions. Speaking of Jerusalem, as she then was, he says: "Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are ravening wolves. . . . Her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law." Hilkiah could not use this man as an *instrument*, and, hence, he did not use him *at all*.

In Jer. vii, 22, we read: "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices." At the time this was written, Hilkiah's pretended "book of the law" had begun to be accepted by the people; and since it represented the Lord as occupying much of his time in the undignified occupation of teaching and commanding the people "concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices," and in the still more undignified operation of regaling his olfactories upon the savory odors of roast beef, Jeremiah felt it to be his duty to thus plainly contradict the pernicious and blasphemous teachings of that book.

In Is. i, 11-14, we read: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no

more vain oblations : incense is an abomination unto me ; the new-moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with it ; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new-moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth ; they are a trouble unto me ; I am weary to bear them." From this language, which, if ever used at all by Isaiah, must have been used a hundred years or more before Hilkiah's time, we learn that Isaiah boldly opposed the absurd doctrines concerning sacrifices, sabbaths, etc., which were taught in his day, and which were afterward incorporated by Hilkiah in his pretended "book of the law." Had the "book of the law," containing these doctrines, existed in his day, or had these doctrines rested upon any other good authority, would he have thus opposed them, and pronounced them iniquities and abominations in the sight of the Lord? If he had believed that the Lord had required these things at the hands of the people, would he have needed to ask, "Who hath required this at your hand?" From all this, is it not evident that the "book of the law" was the production of a later time than that of Isaiah?

And now, what have my opponents to say on the other side of this question? They teach that the high priest, Caiaphas, one of Hilkiah's successors, did perpetrate an imposition upon the people. They teach that he did bribe the soldiers, who guarded the sepulcher of Jesus, and did instruct them to make a false report concerning the disappearance of the body of Jesus, which they had been placed there to guard. And do these opponents of mine know that Hilkiah was any more honest than was Caiaphas ; or that the workmen in Hilkiah's employ were any more honest than were the soldiers who guarded the sepulcher of Jesus? Was not Hilkiah's character as a man and as a priest a thousand-fold blacker than was that of Caiaphas? Had Caiaphas, like Hilkiah, ever offered to God, upon altars, vast numbers of human sacrifices? Had he, like Hilkiah, ever dug up the rotting bodies of the dead, and burnt them

upon altars as sacrifices to God? Besides this, did not Hilkiah's safety—his very life—depend upon the success of some such scheme as the finding of that book? Was there not, then, in his case, a far more weighty motive for the perpetration of a fraud upon the people, than there was in the case of Caiaphas, whose life, whose liberty, and whose office were, in no way, endangered? If, then, to accomplish his own purposes, Caiaphas, with his far better character, and with no urgent necessity pressing upon him, did bribe the soldiers, and did deceive the people in regard to the disappearance of an important dead body, is it unreasonable to believe, or, at least, to suspect, that, with his far worse character, and with a fearful necessity pressing upon him, Hilkiah would perpetrate a similar fraud in regard to the finding of an important book? Is not the circumstantial evidence against Hilkiah much stronger than is that against Caiaphas? And must we, indeed, as your priests teach, be eternally damned, if we do not believe the weaker testimony against Caiaphas, and if we do believe the stronger testimony against Hilkiah?

From the fact that the book which Hilkiah pretended to have found was passed about from man to man, it must have been written upon some light material, such as papyrus or parchment. But will my opponents attempt to prove that either of these articles, or that any other light writing material, was in use, and especially among the Jews, at an earlier date than Hilkiah's own time? Upon what kind of material, then, was that book written, and how large could it have been, and yet have lain so long, unfound, "in the house of the Lord?" Besides this, who wrote the book? If it had been written by Moses, it must have been eight hundred years old, and could not have been written upon either papyrus or parchment, both these articles being certainly unknown in his day. If the book was not written by either Moses or Hilkiah, its authorship, of necessity, is thrown upon some entirely unknown party

who may have been, if possible, a greater scoundrel than was either Moses or Hilkiah.

Besides all this, I would like to have my opponents inform us how long this book had been in use before it was lost; also, when, how, and by whom, it was lost. If it had been in use among the Jews during the first five centuries of their residence in the land of Canaan, why is it not once mentioned in all that portion of their history? Was it not of as much importance to them as the Bible is to us? And could the history of five hundred years of any Christian nation be given without even the slightest allusion to the Bible? And how came that book to be lost? Was it in no one's care? Was no one responsible for it? Was it never missed? Was the party who lost it never called to account for his carelessness? Was no inquiry ever made concerning it? Was no effort ever made to find it? Did so great a loss create no excitement among the people? Would the entire loss of every copy in existence of the Bible create no excitement at the present time? Why was no record of that great loss ever made? And how could that book have lain, unfound, "in the house of the Lord," for so long a period that even the tradition of its existence and of its contents had perished from among men? If there were but one copy of the Bible in the world, do you think it could be so long and so thoroughly lost in any "house of the Lord?"

In the entire history of the children of Israel, up to the time of Hilkiah, I can find but one mention made of "the book of the law." This mention is found in the seventeenth chapter of the same book in which we find the story of Hilkiah. Being evidently written by the same author, this mention does not at all strengthen the story.

This mention makes "the book of the law" to have been used by itinerant teachers, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, 510 years after the death of Moses, and 317 years before the pretended finding of the same book by Hilkiah. At the very farthest, then, the book could not have been lost

over 317 years. And could the people, still living under a government in which the laws contained in this book had once been so generally taught and enforced, have entirely lost, in so short a time, all tradition of the book from which most of their laws were derived? Besides this, we learn from the same writer that about sixty years before Hilkiah's time, Hezekiah had the people thoroughly taught in the "laws of the Lord." Whether these laws were taught from "the book of the law," or merely from memory, we are not informed. It makes no difference, however, from what they were taught. If they were thus generally taught at all, at so recent a time, how came Josiah and his people to be so ignorant of those same laws? Would not many old persons have been still living who had learned those laws during the reign of Hezekiah; and would not these persons have kept the memory of those laws alive among the people? What say my opponents?

Finally, do you believe that your God actually did thus leave his "Holy Word" liable to be entirely lost? Do you believe that he actually did thus leave the salvation of the whole human race to depend upon the accidental finding of this book? And do you believe that he really will eternally damn all of us poor Infidels simply because we are unable to believe this absurd story? Thus we dispose of the Old Testament. We find that it stands upon nothing.

LECTURE THIRD.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

RESTING, as it does, upon the authenticity of the whole Bible, the Christian Religion must fall to the ground, if any essential portion of that book prove to be unauthentic. In proving, therefore, as I did in my last two lectures, that the Old Testament Scriptures are totally unworthy of belief, I actually proved, also, that the Christian Religion is a monstrous imposition. If there never was such a creation as is described in the Old Testament, then there evidently never could have been any such Creator as is taught by the Christian Religion; and, if there never was any such God or Creator, then there evidently never could have been any such Son of God as is taught by the Christian Religion. If there never was any fall of man—if man was never in a lost condition, then there evidently never could have been any such redemption—any such Redeemer or Savior—as is taught by the Christian Religion.

If we accept Christianity itself, we are, of necessity, bound also to accept all that upon which it depends. We are bound to accept the doctrines, plainly taught in the Bible, that, only about six thousand years ago, the entire universe was absolutely created, all out of nothing; that this creation was performed within the space of six literal days; that the earth was made flat and stationary; that it is much larger than all the rest of the universe put together; that what we call the sky is a solid structure or firmament, placed like an inverted bowl over our flat and

stationary earth; that, above this firmament, are vast reservoirs of water provided for the benefit of the earth; that a God lives up there, and has his throne resting upon this same firmament; that, whenever he sees fit to do so, this God can cause the water from these reservoirs to pour down upon the earth, through valves or windows, provided for this purpose, in the firmament; that enough water was once made to thus pour down through these windows, to raise a flood several miles in depth all over the face of the earth; that, in order to keep them from falling down upon the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars, all, of necessity, at an equal distance from the earth, are set, or stuck like nails, into the under-side of this same solid sky or firmament, and, of equal necessity, a little lower down or nearer to the earth than are the waters which are above this firmament; that many stars have already fallen down upon the earth, and that, at some future time, all the balance are to come rattling down upon the ground, like so many figs, and that the firmament itself is then to be rolled together like a scroll and taken away; that light could and did exist before there was any luminous body to emit light; that several perfect days could and did exist before there was any sun to produce day; that all the fowls were "brought forth" by the "waters," at the same time with the fish, and in the same manner; that, at the same time, the same fowls were all "formed out of the ground;" that all the plants were "brought forth" by the "earth," just as they are brought forth to-day; that, at the same time, these same plants were all "made," without ever having been "in the earth" at all; that there was once a serpent that walked, talked, and reasoned like a philosopher; that there was once an ass that exhorted like a Methodist preacher at a camp-meeting; that a slice of flesh large enough to make a full-grown woman of was once carved from a sleeping man, without waking him, or even making a sore place; that a thousand well-armed men let one man beat out their brains with a bone; that

this same man, with his naked hands, overturned an immense building, in which were three thousand people, all of whom were slain; that a certain other man boarded three days at a kind of hotel kept inside of a fish's belly; that this fish was hell, or at least a hell-of-fish; and a thousand more similar doctrines. If we cannot accept all these monstrous doctrines, then we are bound to pronounce the Christian Religion a monstrous imposition.

In order to sustain your religion, therefore, my Christian friends, you must not only admit the truth of all these absurd doctrines, but must actually prove that they are true. Besides this, you must actually prove that the whole human race sprung from a single pair, Adam and Eve; that these two primitive persons were naked savages too ignorant to know that they were naked; that God intended to keep them always in that degraded condition; that God forbade them, on pain of immediate death, to eat a certain fruit, which, to tempt them, he placed before them, which they most greatly needed, which he very well knew they would eat, and which he fully intended they should eat; that when, according to his own expectation and intention, they did eat this fruit, he flew into an uncontrollable rage, and immediately passed the sentence of death, both temporal and eternal, not only on these two poor ignorant offenders, but, also, upon all their posterity, who, being yet unborn, could not have been guilty of any offense at all; that, in order to save mankind, as far as possible, from the effects of this sentence, which he himself, in his infinite wisdom and mercy, had passed upon them, he then determined to beget himself a son, and to vent his wrath upon this innocent son, instead of upon the offending human race; that, after four thousand years had passed, and hell was pretty well crammed with the victims of his wrath, he did beget himself a son, and did have this son cruelly and treacherously murdered; that he begat this son upon an unmarried woman; that he performed this act without any bodily parts to perform it with. You must prove, too, that Jesus

was certainly this same God-begotten—this same God-murdered—Savior of the world, and that yourselves are the true followers of this murdered Son of a murderous God.

Knowing, as I do, that you are totally unable to prove any of these things—knowing that you have nothing at all to stand on except bare-faced assumptions, I might, with perfect propriety, condemn your religion as an outrageous imposition. Before doing this, however, I wish to show that this condemnation is not only perfectly just, but also absolutely unavoidable.

In the first place, then, it is a universally admitted fact that the Jews, God's chosen people, always did, and do yet, pronounce Christianity a monstrous fraud. They certainly ought to be the best judges of the meaning of their own Scriptures, and yet they declare that, in the entire body of those Scriptures, there is not a single passage that has the slightest reference to Jesus, the pretended Messiah of the Christians. They justly ridicule the absurd interpretations put upon many portions of their Scriptures by Christians in their desperate attempts to make it appear that those Scriptures refer, prophetically, to Jesus as the Savior of the world. With equal justice they also ridicule the Christian idea of salvation, which consists principally in mere forms and ceremonies by means of which old Uncle Splitfoot is euchered out of souls to which he has a perfect right, and which, for his own amusement, he would otherwise make dance, barefoot, in melted brimstone. The Jews, having never had any local hell, of course, never needed any such ridiculous means of salvation.

I will now proceed to notice the books of the New Testament; or at least those which are called gospels, and upon which all the others depend. If these books fail, the Christian Religion is bound to fall. In my present lecture, I shall confine myself to the external evidence bearing upon these books, and leave the internal evidence to be examined in my next lecture.

With their usual effrontery, priests have assumed, and

then taught as a fact, that the four books called gospels were written, under inspiration of God, by four saints: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. That this assumption is totally unwarrantable, I will now prove.

In the first place, then, I challenge my opponents to prove that there ever were any such saints, any such writers, as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I can find no evidence that any such persons ever existed. It is said that, on a small island in the Mediterranean Sea, a certain priest, not long ago, was wont to sell for charms, to his credulous flock, the labels from his sardine boxes, representing these labels as relics once worn by Saint Sardine. Here a saint was invented because he was needed. And can my opponents prove that the four saints, of whom we are speaking, were not in like manner mere priestly inventions, gotten up and attached to certain books in order to make those books take with the people? That this was the way those four saints originated, there can be but little doubt. Be this as it may, however, there is not, in any of the four books in question, a single passage that claims to have been written by any one of these four supposititious saints. Besides this, the books do not claim for their unknown authors any such thing as inspiration. This totally unfounded claim was set up for them, in later years, by the connivance of unscrupulous priests, who correctly expected thereby to be the better able to impose the teachings of these books upon the ignorant multitudes. So far from setting up any such claim for themselves, the authors of these books do not even claim inspiration for the supposititious saints "according to" whom they respectively profess to have written. The authors themselves do not even vouch for the truth of their own respective writings. They all shirk this responsibility by severally claiming to write, not what themselves knew to be facts, but what were "according to" the teachings of some other person. By this remarkable prudence, so rare among what are called sacred

writers, these authors exhibit considerable doubt in regard to the truth of the matters concerning which they severally write. Had they themselves professed to know the truth of these matters, or even to firmly believe it, would they so prudently have professed to write "according to" some other parties?

And now, let me ask, what do we know of the character for truthfulness of either these unknown authors themselves, or the supposititious saints "according to" whom they severally profess to have written? When and where did these several authors live? In what language, and from what motives, did they write? What opportunities had they of knowing that any such saints as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, ever existed, or ever taught the doctrines severally ascribed to them? When and where did these four supposititious saints live? In what languages, and from what motives, did they teach the doctrines severally ascribed to them? What opportunities had they of knowing that any such person as Jesus ever lived; that he ever taught the doctrines, or performed the miracles, ascribed to him; that his mother was a virgin; that his father was the Holy Ghost; that he arose from the dead, etc.? To all this you may answer that they were inspired to know all these things. But what proof have you that they were inspired? Did they ever set up for themselves any claim of inspiration? Would they not have set up this claim, if they had been inspired? Does your bare-faced assumption that they were inspired amount to anything as an argument? Finally, what do we know of the character for honesty and competency of the long list of copyists and translators, through whose hands, successively, the several gospels came, before they reached those copies from which our copies were taken?

Among the early Christians, there were probably thousands of men bearing each of the very common names, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This being the case, how are we, from among so many, to know upon which

individual of each of these names was conferred the doubtful honor of being the authority "according to" whom one of the books in question was professedly written? You may claim that, although there may have been thousands of men bearing each of these names, there was only one Saint Matthew, only one Saint Mark, etc. The setting up of this claim, however, can avail you nothing. It is a fact, which no Bible critic will venture to deny, that the term saint prefixed to each of these names is a comparatively modern corruption, and that the gospels were formerly ascribed severally to the unpretentious, the untitled, persons, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Previous to the comparatively recent, and the totally unauthorized, adoption of this prefix, saint, there was not a word, either in the bodies of the gospels, or in their titles, to distinguish these four individuals, in any way, from the thousands of others who may have borne each of these same names.

It is a well-known fact that Saintship is simply one of the many cunning, if not wicked, inventions made by the Catholic Church, during the time of her greatest corruption. It seems to have been instituted in lieu of godship, which, from time immemorial, had been conferred, by nearly all nations, upon their deceased heroes, philosophers, and statesmen. The Christians, having professedly adopted the monotheism of the Jews, could not, as could the polytheistic pagans, consistently increase the number of their gods, by thus conferring godship upon their great men after death. Hence the necessity of inventing an equal honor which could be conferred upon deceased human beings, without any danger of thereby increasing the number of legitimate gods.

Saintship resulting thus, from a necessity of the Catholic Church, is rightfully the exclusive property of its inventors, the Catholics, alone. Protestants can neither make saints, nor buy them. If they have saints, then, at all, they must, of necessity, steal them. Think of this, my

Protestant brethren, and never again have the assurance to claim any property in St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, St. John, St. Sardine, St. Balaam's-ass, or any other saint. Indeed, according to their own rules, the Catholics themselves can exercise the saint-making power only on persons who have been deceased for a long period of years. No man ever was, or ever could be, a saint during his own lifetime. Whatever Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John did, therefore, they must, of necessity, have done as ordinary men, and not as saints. And could the empty act of voting the prefix Saint to the name of each of these four men, a thousand years after the death of the men themselves, add anything to the credibility of what they may have taught or written during their lifetime? Could such a vote make a false statement true, or a forged writing genuine? If it could not do these things, then the gospels are no more worthy of belief now than they would have been had they remained, as they once were, simply "according to" certain unknown and very ordinary persons, called Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

It is a well-known fact that all authors give titles to their own books. The authors of the various gospels could not have been exceptions to this rule. In order that these books, of which there were over fifty in all, might be distinguished one from another, it was absolutely necessary that each of them should have a distinctive title. What, then, were the respective titles of the four gospels which we still retain? Of necessity, those titles must have been the same that the books now have, unless the present titles be forgeries. If the present titles be forgeries, then, in them, we have *prima facie* evidence that the books have been tampered with, and corrupted, we know not to what extent. If, on the other hand, the present titles be genuine, then, in them, we have *prima facie* evidence that the books were not written respectively by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. As we have already seen, these men could not have used the term Saint in connection with

their own names; and, unless they were madmen, they would not, with reference to themselves, have used the expression "according to." With all your wonderful capacity for believing absurd and incredible things, can you, my Christian friends, really believe that each of the four persons in question acted so absurdly, so shamelessly, as to declare that his own writings were "according to" his own sainted self? If, in a collection of scientific writings, you should find an article entitled, "Theory of Electricity according to the World-renowned Philosopher, Dr. Franklin," could you, for a moment, be made to believe that the article had been written and entitled by Dr. Franklin himself? If, further, in the same collection of writings, and in consecutive order, you should find several other similar articles, each one of them professing to be the "Theory of Electricity according to" some other "World-renowned Philosopher," would you not be absolutely certain that the articles had been written by other parties, and not by the "World-renowned Philosophers" themselves? How, then, can you believe that Matthew himself ever wrote, and entitled the book called "The Gospel according to Saint Matthew?" So of the other gospels. Could each of them have been written by the man "according to" whom it was written?

If, then, you still wish to claim that these gospels were written respectively by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you are bound not only to admit, but to prove, that the original titles of these books have been feloniously destroyed, and that the present titles are base forgeries. In proving this, however, you are bound to prove also that the books themselves, as we now have them, were put upon the world by a set of base forgers—by a set of men who, to accomplish their own purposes, would not have scrupled to forge, or at least to corrupt, as much as they saw fit, of the contents as well as of the titles of these books. Besides this, after taking away from these books their forged titles, is there a single word left, in any one of

them, from which we can even infer that Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John had anything to do with it? Finally, how are we to know that the unknown forgers in question forged, for the titles of these books, the names of real persons? May they not have forged the names of fictitious persons? And if they did do this, must not the gospels be fictitious also? Could they be otherwise and still be “according to” fictitious characters?

From all this, it is evident that, if the titles of the gospels be genuine, the Christian religion rests entirely upon the unsupported word of a set of totally unknown and irresponsible men; and that if the titles be not genuine, it rests, in like manner, entirely upon the unsupported word of a set of admitted liars and forgers. Take which horn they may of this dilemma, my opponents must have wonderfully hard faces to unblushingly declare, as is their wont, that these books are the “Inspired Word of God,” and that all those who doubt that they are so will be incontinently hustled off into hell.

As to when the four books in question were severally written, nothing certain is known. Dr. Clarke, the great Commentator, admits that, in regard to this matter, there is a great difference of opinion among Bible critics. The first Christian father that mentions these books is Irenæus, who flourished near the close of the second century. Had they existed previous to that time, the earlier fathers would surely have mentioned them. Irenæus himself probably forged them, or had this done. From all we can learn of his character, he was, in a high degree, ambitious, enterprising, and unscrupulous—just the kind of man to successfully accomplish such an undertaking. At any rate, whether he forged them himself or not, he certainly introduces them to the world, on his own authority alone, and declares that there are just four of them, “because there are but four quarters of the world, and every cherubim has four faces.” How wonderfully convincing is the unsupported testimony of such a reasoner!

It is also admitted to be a fact that no one knows where, or in what language, the gospels were severally written. It is further admitted that the oldest copy of them now known was written as late as the sixth century; and that no one even professes to know how many, and how great, changes may have been made in them before they reached that copy. Indeed, it is admitted to be an undeniable fact that no one can be absolutely certain that any portion of the original contents of these books remains unchanged. On the other hand, it is well known that over eighty thousand copies of these books have been found, all of which differ, one from another, in many important particulars. Indeed, many of these copies resemble one another very little in anything except their titles. In some instances, whole chapters have been added to some copies, or dropped from others. No one even pretends to know that our copies were taken from the most nearly correct of these eighty thousand different readings. And yet our priests have the effrontery to denounce as Infidels, doomed to eternal burnings, all those persons whose superior intelligence renders them unable to accept, as the "Inspired Word of God," these mutilated, self-contradictory, and totally unauthentic writings.

It is a well-known fact that many of the fathers of the church, if not all of them, taught that lying, forgery, the invention of pretended miracles, etc., when performed for the advancement of the Christian Religion and the glory of God, were meritorious acts which should, by no means, be left unperformed. It is also a well-known fact that, for the first twelve centuries or more of their history, the Catholic priesthood were noted for their almost universal corruption—for their wonderful assiduity in the propagation of their religion, by means of lying, forging books, inventing pretended miracles, burning heretics, etc. The Christian who would now deny these things, would simply give the lie to the greatest lights of his own church.

and expose his own woeful ignorance of the history of his own religion.

And would the original gospels, by whomsoever written, be at all likely to come down, for so many hundreds of years, untampered with by the long list of acknowledged liars and forgers, through whose hands we are bound to admit that they did come? If, in order to render the ignorant multitudes more Godly—more pliable instruments of priestcraft—certain radical changes in the gospels had been found necessary, do you suppose that those corrupt priests would have scrupled to make those changes? And did not those priests have every opportunity to make such changes? Was not the possession and the use of the Bible confined exclusively to themselves? Had they not all a common interest in deceiving the people? Did they not, in their frequent quarrels, habitually charge one another with being liars, forgers, etc.? And did they not generally *prove* these charges to be *true*? Did they not, for the glory of God, often engage in the holy and delightful occupation of cutting one another's throats, boring out one another's eyes, cutting out one another's tongues, etc.? Dare my opponents deny that this is substantially the history of the Catholic priesthood, during the twelve or more centuries in question? And are we to be damned if we suspect that such men, whenever they had occasion to do so, mutilated *books* with as little compunction of conscience as they exhibited when mutilating *one another*?

It is a well-known fact that the followers of Jesus were not, for some time, called Christians; and that when they were so called the appellation, Christian, was applied to them in derision. The first converts, to what was afterwards called the Christian Religion, were the Ebeonites and the Nazarenes. In the strictest sense of the term, these sects were Jews. Their conversion did not involve any apostasy from Judaism. They differed from other Jews simply in accepting Jesus as the expected Messiah

of the Jewish Nation, while the other Jews rejected him as an impostor, and still looked for the true Messiah to come. These early and true followers of Jesus continued to observe all the rites of the Jewish Religion. In this, they strictly followed the example of Jesus, who lived and died a faithful Jew, who simply labored to purify Judaism, not to destroy it; who never embraced or founded any other religion, and never authorized his followers to do so. My opponents would do well to think of this matter, and to remember that, since Jesus himself never went *outside of Judaism*, no one can possibly *follow* him, where he never *went, outside of that religion*.

It is also a well-known fact that, unlike all other nations, the Jews were always strict monotheists; that they always looked with horror upon the paganistic doctrine of a plurality of gods, and especially so upon the degrading and blasphemous doctrine that the gods sometimes increased their own numbers by literally begetting offspring upon human females. It is a well-known fact that they never did expect their Messiah to be either a *God*, or literally the *son of a God*; that they always did expect him to be a *man*, *begotten* and *born* as are *other men*, but endued from on high, with power to restore the Jewish Nation to more than its pristine glory. More than this, they never did expect.

As I have already said, the Ebeonites and the Nazarenes believed that, in the person of Jesus, this expected Messiah—this great and good man—had come. While believing this, however, they rejected with horror the idea that he was, in any sense of the term, a *God*. Their gospel, which Epiphanius and Jerome both claim to have seen, seems to have been substantially what is now called the “Gospel according to Saint Matthew,” but did not contain any portion of the first two chapters of that book, as we now have it. In place of these two chapters, it contained something quite different, but which is now lost.

In order to sustain the polytheistic ideas which they

brought with them from their old idolatrous religions—in order to make *Jesus* stand, in their *new religion*, just as *Prometheus* stood in their *old*, as literally the *Son of God*, and not a mere man, as taught by the Jewish Christians—the gentiles or pagans of Greece, Rome, and other nations, when they adopted the name of Christianity, and became the ruling power of the Christian Church, found it necessary to make some important changes in the gospels and other sacred writings as they had previously existed. Among these changes was the forging of those polytheistic writings, which now constitute the first two chapters of Matthew, and the inserting of them in the place of something which is now lost, but which was evidently not favorable to polytheism, or trinitarianism.

In making these changes, however, these pagan mutilators utterly failed to give their forged addition to the Book of Matthew any connection whatever, in sense or otherwise, with the balance of the book. The third chapter opens as follows: “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea.” Mark the language, “In those days!” This expression undeniably refers to something which, in the order of the narrative, immediately precedes it—to the description of certain events which occurred, not thirty years before, but “in those” very “days” in which John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness. But, in our present copies, what does immediately precede this expression? A description of the birth of Jesus, and of his flight into Egypt—events that occurred thirty years before John appeared in the wilderness. And would the author have kept right on in his narrative, and, referring to these events, say that “in those days came John the Baptist?” Had he said this, would he not have lied? Did John come in those days in which Jesus was being born, and being carried into Egypt? Certainly not. Is it not evident, then, that the preceding portion of the author’s narrative has been omitted, in

order to make room for something which he never wrote—something forged at a later date?

The famous Bible critic, Calmet, declares that the seventh and eighth verses of the fifth chapter of the First Epistle of John “are not in any ancient Bible.” By reference to these two verses, we perceive that they are clearly intended to sustain that favorite doctrine of the pagans—the doctrine of a *plurality* of *Gods*. These two verses, therefore, were evidently forged, and inserted into this Epistle, for the same reason that led to the forging of the first two chapters of Matthew, and the inserting of them into that book. In both cases, the reason evidently was nothing more nor less than the fact that such forgeries were necessary to sustain the polytheistic or trinitarian views of the pagan mutilators who perpetrated them.

By a record in the Cronicon of Muis, it has now been proved that a general alteration of the four “Gospels” was made, in the sixth century, by order of the emperor Anastatius, in whose decree we find the following language: “That the Holy Gospels, as written, Idiotis Evangelistis, are to be corrected and amended.” Scaliger mentions this event, and Dr. Mill vouches for the truth of the record. If, as literary productions, these books were formerly inferior to what they now are, they must, indeed, have been written, as Anastatius says they were, by idiotic evangelists. Luther seems to have had a similar opinion of some of the other writers of the New Testament. At any rate, he declared that the Epistle of James was an Epistle of straw.

In the Monthly Repository, the Unitarians denounce the first chapter of Matthew, and the first chapter of Luke, as being both “absolute falsities.” It is a well-known fact, too, that the Catholics and the Protestants mutually charge each other with having, in many instances, grossly corrupted the Holy Scriptures, even within the last four centuries.

In his "Life of Paul," Boulanger says: "The Manicheans, who formed a very numerous sect at the commencement of Christianity, rejected as false all the books of the New Testament, and showed other writings, quite different, which they gave as authentic." In this same work, Boulanger quotes the Christian father, the orthodox Bishop Fauste, as declaring that "the books called the evangelists have been composed long after the times of the apostles, by some obscure men, who, fearing that the world would not give credit to their relation of matters of which they could not be informed, have published them under the name of the apostles; and which are so full of sottishness, and discordant relations, that there is neither agreement nor connection between them." Boulanger also quotes Fauste as saying to Augustine: "It is thus that your predecessors have inserted in the Scriptures of our Lord many things, which, though they carry his name, agree not with his doctrine. This is not surprising, since that we have often proved these things have not been written by himself, nor by his apostles, but, that for the greatest part, they are founded upon tales, upon vague reports, and put together, by I know not what, half Jews, with but little agreement between them, and which they have, nevertheless, published under the name of the apostles of our Lord, and have thus attributed to them their errors and lies." This language, which was used about the close of the fourth century, by one who had every opportunity to be thoroughly acquainted with the facts, shows us not only the character of the priest who fixed up our New Testament, but also the character of that book itself, when it passed from their hands into the hands of a long line of equally corrupt successors. If, then, it was so fearfully corrupted with "errors and lies," at the end of the fourth century, when it had only started on its way down to our own times, what must have been its condition at the end of the fourteenth century, when it had passed

for a thousand more years through equally corrupt hands? And can its condition be any better now?

In his "Critical History" of the text of the New Testament, the celebrated French theologian, M. Simon, says: "We have no solid proof in antiquity to make it appear to us that the names set at the head of every gospel were thereunto prefixed by those who are the authors of them." M. Simon also says: "We ought not too easily to give credit to first originals of churches (the fathers); every one strives to advance their antiquity as much as possible, and they make no scruple, on such occasions, to counterfeit acts, when they have none that are true." Du Pin and Mosheim both substantially confirm this testimony.

In his "Introduction to the New Testament," Dr. Clarke specifies fourteen fruitful sources, whence grave errors and corruptions inevitably would, and certainly did, creep into the New Testament Scriptures before the invention of printing. Among other things, he says: "All the versions of all countries differ, less or more, among themselves, which is a proof that they were formed from different MSS., and that those versions exhibit the readings which were contained in those manuscripts." After reading all that he says on the subject, we are not at all surprised when he says, as he does in another place, that he merely "*assumes*" that the "sacred writings are a *divine record*, a revelation from *God*;" and when he declares that he has "purposely avoided the question concerning the *authenticity* of the sacred writings in general." If, in over thirty years of the most indefatigable researches, this great and learned man had been able to find any *proof* that these writings were "a *revelation* from *God*," would he have had any need to *assume* that they were so? Would he not have given to the world the *proof*, and not his own mere *assumption*? And if he had not had very serious misgivings in regard to the "authenticity of the sacred writings in general," would he have so studiously avoided

entering into a discussion of the question of their authenticity? If he could have made them appear to be authentic, would he not have done so? Does he not virtually confess that a discussion of the subject would expose their utter want of authenticity?

It is an admitted fact that, about the same time that the four gospels under consideration made their appearance, some fifty others also made their appearance. Each one of these others claimed just as high authority as does any one of the four which we now have; and until they were condemned, by a *party vote*, of the first Council of Nice, in the year 325, each one of these other gospels had about as many advocates as had any one of our four.

As yet, there was no tribunal, generally recognized as possessing power to determine, authoritatively, which ones of these numerous gospels should be accepted as the "Inspired Word of God," and which ones should be rejected as "base forgeries." Together with numberless epistles, revelations, etc., these various gospels were scattered about everywhere, and were severally accepted or rejected, enlarged or abridged, preserved or destroyed, according to the caprice of the parties into whose hands they chanced to fall. As the inevitable result of such a condition of affairs, the people all became broken up into a multitude of sects intensely hostile toward one another. As has always been the custom, on such occasions, with religionists of every description, these various hostile sects proceeded, in the name of God, to butcher and to burn one another, in ways too horrible to admit of description. In all these bloody conflicts, the *victors*, as a matter of course, were always *orthodox*, *their books* always *authentic*. The *vanquished*, on the other hand, equally as a matter of course, were always *heretical*; *their books* always *unauthentic*. When *victory changed sides*, the *orthodoxy* of the *parties*, and the *authenticity* of their respective *sets of books*, always *changed sides* at the *same time*. In all cases, *God*, *orthodoxy*, and *authenticity* were on the side of the *stronger party*.

Thus you see that, at one time, or in one place, one set of books were the "Inspired Word of God," while at another time, or in another place, this same set of books became "base forgeries," and another entirely different set of books, which had been "base forgeries," became the "Inspired Word of God." In this way, the legitimate workings of the Christian Religion were practically illustrated. Starting out thus, it has ever been the most fruitful of all sources of dissensions, of crimes, and of bloodshed. Even at the present time, the orthodoxy of one sect, or of one locality, is frequently the most damnable heresy of another sect, or of another locality. While one sect denounces eternal damnation against us if we do not believe certain doctrines, another sect just as emphatically denounces eternal damnation against us if we do believe those doctrines. Admitting that these equally respectable sects are both correct, we are all sure of at least one good damning. Most professors of religion will be twice damned; once for what they do believe, and once for what they do not believe. Of all the damned, these will be the most damnably damned.

It is a well-known fact that the various books of the New Testament were never collected into one volume until the year 325. Then the Emperor Constantine, bloody murderer though he was, grew weary of the incessant dissensions among his Christian subjects, and ordered them to determine, in a council of delegates, which ones of their many gospels and so-called sacred books should be rejected as "base forgeries," and which ones should be accepted as the "Inspired Word of God." As to Constantine himself, he cared very little which set of books were adopted. He cared just as little, too, whether the books adopted were authentic or otherwise, provided only that they sustained his favorite pagan doctrines that there were a plurality of gods, and that the gods sometimes increased their own numbers by begetting other gods upon human females. These purely pagan doctrines, Constantine, who was still

a thorough pagan in belief, was determined, by fair means or foul, to have engrafted upon Christianity, which, to spite the pagan priests with whom he had quarreled, he had nominally embraced, a short time before. Beyond the adoption of these, his favorite paganistic doctrines, about all he cared for was to have peace restored among his own subjects, in order that he might the more successfully carry on his wars against other nations.

In compliance with the emperor's order, there assembled at the city of Nice a Council of over three hundred delegates. Of this Council, the murder-blackened pagan, Constantine himself, acted as Chairman. In this Council, all the various sects were represented, and each sect strove to have their own favorite set of books adopted, as the "Inspired Word of God," and their own favorite creed, as the "Orthodox Creed" of the whole Church. In this attempt, however, no sect could succeed. No one gospel, even, could obtain a majority of votes in its favor. By finally combining, however, like, political tricksters, and mutually voting in one another's books, the advocates of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were at last successful in their efforts to have these books adopted.

From all this, it is clear that, if a different set of delegates had thus successfully combined, we would have had, for our New Testament—for the "Inspired Word of God—" an entirely different set of books—a set which are now "base forgeries." If, by such a combination, these "base forgeries" had been made the "Inspired Word of God," we would have had to believe them, or be eternally damned. In that case, too, the books of our present New Testament would have been "base forgeries," and to have believed them would have involved certain damnation. Indeed, the mere chance of a successful combination of delegates in favor of some other set of books, would have entirely reversed the respective directions in which salvation and damnation now run. No superior excellence, no better claim to authenticity, was established in favor of

the set of books which were adopted. As I have already shown, their adoption was due simply to the fact that their advocates were more skillful tricksters than were the advocates of other rival sets of books. Dare my opponents deny these facts?

Although this Council formed a New Testament, they did not form the New Testament as we now have it. Thirty-eight years afterwards, Origen made a new selection of books, and by his almost unlimited influence in the Church, he had this set adopted, by the Council of Laodicea, as the only "Genuine Scriptures." This selection, which differed materially from that made by the Council of Nice, is commonly supposed to have included the canonical books in use at the present time. This selection, like the former one, was made by the mere *votes of uninspired men*.

Several of the books selected on this occasion were afterwards rejected by the great Council of 406, but were replaced by the great Council of 680. Thus, by a majority vote of these Councils, the very same books were at sometimes made "base forgeries," and, at other times, the "Inspired Word of God." Indeed, so great a power did these Councils finally become, that, by their mere vote, they could do almost anything. Just as our city Councils proceed, by vote, to enact, to amend, to repeal, or to re-enact ordinances, for the government of the city, so did these church Councils proceed, by vote, to enact, to amend, to repeal, or to re-enact "Holy Scriptures," for the government of the Church. In the same way, they changed the very nature and constitution of things. By a mere vote, they changed lies into truths, and truths into lies. By a mere vote, they changed genuine writings into base forgeries, and base forgeries into genuine writings. By a mere vote, they changed bread and wine into the real flesh and blood of Jesus. By a mere vote, they created a purgatory, in which to confine half-damned sinners. By a mere vote (787), they gave bodies to the angels. By a mere vote

(1,215), they took these bodies away again, and made it a capital offense to teach that the angels ever had any bodies. By a mere vote, they gave attributes to God, and took attributes from him. By a mere vote, they made God a man, and a man God. By a mere vote, they made one person three, and three persons one.

Most of the attributes which God now possesses were conferred upon him by a mere vote, and that far from unanimous, of the first Council of Nice. These attributes are specified in what is called the Nicene or Athanasian Creed, and are in force among all orthodox Christians. At present, however, I have nothing to do with these attributes.

The Godship of Jesus was also created and conferred upon him by a mere vote of less than half of the members of this same first Council of Nice. Previous to that time a majority of the Christians, as I have already said, were strict monotheists, or unitarians, and regarded Jesus simply as a God-like man, and not, in any sense, as a God. This was especially the case with the Jewish portion of the Christian Church; and this portion was then very numerous. Among the pagan converts, however, there was a strong disposition to carry with them, into their new religion, some of the prominent and popular doctrines of paganism. This was especially the case in regard to the doctrine of a plurality of gods, and also in regard to the doctrine that old gods sometimes beget young ones.

These pagans, having always been accustomed to many gods and demi-gods, of various degrees of removal from man, could not now be content with only one God, and he the farthest of all removed from themselves. They wished that this great and mysterious Being should at least have one Son, half human, who, being thus related to themselves, would sympathize in their sorrows and infirmities, and act as their Mediator with his incomprehensible Father. Such a Mediator they had always had in their

old religion, and now, if they could only have this precious doctrine of a half-human-half-God Mediator engrafted upon their new religion, then, in changing their religion, they would have very little to do except to insert, in the old creeds, the name of Jesus instead of Prometheus, or some other one of their demi-god Mediators. With this simple change of names, their new religion would be substantially the same as their old; the inferior deities of their old religion being exactly replaced by the saints and the angels of their new religion, to which many of them had been converted, by an edict of their emperor, without any change in their opinions.

After this remarkable paganizing of Christianity had been accomplished, the pagan temples, by a mere change of names, became Christian churches. By a similar change of names, the statues of the inferior gods became the statues of saints; and, without any greater change, the songs, which had been sung in honor of Prometheus, continued to be sung in honor of Jesus.

“Alas! and did Prometheus bleed,
And did our Savior die?” etc.,

is one of the many pagan songs adopted by the Christian Church, at the same time that she adopted the fundamental doctrines of paganism.

Previous to this paganizing process, the Jews had furnished a large proportion of the converts to Christianity. After the completion of this process, however, very few Jews were ever converted. They abhorred the paganistic idea that there were a plurality of Gods; that old Gods sometimes begot young ones on human females; that a mere man, a Jew like themselves, had become God himself, or, at least, a co-equal with God; that the infinitely great and glorious Creator and Sustainer of the Universe had ever been a man, a Jew like themselves; that, like every other man, he had passed through all the stages of gestation from an invisible life-germ to a perfectly formed child;

that he had ever been born of an unmarried woman of the lower class; that he had ever been born of a woman whom he himself had made; that he had ever been a little helpless babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes; that he had ever gone through the painful process of teething; that he had ever suffered from diarrhœa, measles, scarlatina, and whooping-cough; that he had ever been troubled with worms, which he himself had made and pronounced "very good;" that he had ever been dosed with catnip tea and soothing syrup, while writhing and squalling from the pangs of colic; that he had ever indulged in the use of wine and other luxuries to such an extent as to cause himself to be called a "glutton and a wine-bibber;" and, finally, that he had ever been executed as a malefactor.

As to the pagans, however, no such thoughts as these ever troubled them in the least. To them, none of these ideas were either absurd or objectionable. They had always been accustomed to the idea of a very materialistic intercourse between the gods and certain females of the human race. They had always been accustomed, too, to the idea that very materialistic results sometimes followed this kind of intercourse. With them, these ideas were extremely popular. Hence, when they adopted the name of Christianity, they did so without relinquishing these ideas. In faith, they were still pagans; and, as I have already said, when they gained the ascendancy, they reduced Christianity, in all but the name, to their old form of paganism.

Chief among the pagan converts, who wished thus to engraft upon Christianity the fundamental doctrines of their old religion, was the Emperor Constantine. As I have already said, he acted as Chairman of the Council of Nice—of the Council that thus reduced primitive Christianity to paganism. Indeed, as I shall yet show, it was principally due to his influence that the paganizing process was successfully accomplished. Whatever may have been

their own opinions, and their own wishes, the majority of that Council did not dare oppose his well-known wishes.

At the time of that Council he was a very recent convert from the ranks of paganism. Indeed, his conversion was merely nominal. He did not even take the trouble to pretend that he had experienced any change either of heart or of opinions. His conversion was entirely outward, and was dictated by selfish motives alone. Although Christian priests have almost deified him, because he did so much to elevate them to power, yet he was, in fact, one of the most execrable human monsters that ever cursed the earth. His hands were almost constantly dripping with the warm life-blood of some newly-murdered victim. Among many others, he deliberately murdered two of his own brothers-in-law, his own father-in-law, and one of his own nephews, a boy only twelve years of age. Far worse than any of these, however, was the murder of his own son, Crispus, a worthy young man, and the unspeakably horrible murder of his own wife, whom he boiled to death in hot water. One of these last murders is said to have been committed while he was sitting as Chairman of the Council whose vote made our New Testament the "Inspired Word of God;" whose vote made Jesus the "Son of God;" whose vote established the "Nicene Creed," upon which all orthodox Christianity still rests.

After Constantine had committed several atrocious murders, he applied for absolution to the pagan priests, who refused to grant it, on the ground that crimes of so great enormity were beyond their jurisdiction. This refusal seriously offended him, and, for revenge, he deserted the pagans, whose patron he had hitherto been, and went over to their rivals, the Christians. The Christian priests received him with open arms, granted him absolution, and made him the head of their church; and this position he continued to hold during the balance of his life, notwithstanding the notorious fact that he still continued to be guilty of the most atrocious of crimes.

From all these facts, which I suppose no one acquainted with Constantine's history will deny, you perceive that his so-called conversion involved no change in either his faith or his character. In his faith, he was still a pagan; in his character, still a murderer. And this blood-dyed monster was the great "First Christian Emperor," the pride of the Christian Church. Indeed, he may justly be regarded as the father—as the maker of that church in its paganized form. Under his direct control, the most paganistic of the many gospels, epistles, etc., with which the country was flooded, were voted to be the "Inspired Word of God." Under his direct control, Jesus was voted to be the "Son of God;" and, by this vote, the fundamental pagan doctrines of polytheism and demi-godism were inseparably fixed upon what is erroneously called the Christian Religion. Indeed, as I have already said, it was principally through the instrumentality of this monster that Christianity, so-called, became what it has been, and what it still is. He elevated it to power; and, in so doing, he ushered in the "Dark Ages"—a thousand years of Bible supremacy, a millennium of Christianity, a vast period of the world's history, all black, as the darkest midnight, with ignorance, superstition, rapine, bloodshed, untold sufferings, and nameless crimes.

Although I cannot now name my authority, yet I have somewhere read that Jesus was made the "Son of God" by a minority vote of that first Council of Nice; that many of the delegates who would have opposed the conferring of divine honors upon this man, or upon any other human being, were so much intimidated by the blood-thirsty Emperor and his party, that they did not vote at all. Had these delegates voted, the proposition to confer Godship upon Jesus would have been defeated, and it would have been to-day a horrible form of idolatry to worship him as, in any sense, a God.

The events that followed the breaking up of that memorable Council fully justified the fears of those delegates

who refused to vote at all on the proposition to confer divine honors upon Jesus. Arius and the others who did vote against this monstrous proposition, together with all that portion of the church that sustained them in their brave and righteous action, were hunted down, like wild beasts, and almost exterminated. For having thus so successfully and so unfairly exercised his powerful influence in their favor, the paganistic polytheists, or trinitarians of the present day, who claim to be the only orthodox Christians, should even yet, by a vote, make Constantine a saint, just as he, by a vote, made Jesus a God, and the most thoroughly paganistic of all the gospels, epistles, etc., then extant, the "Inspired Word of God."

In justice to Constantine, however, I will say that he was by no means the only unscrupulous man that constituted a portion of that memorable Council. As is usual with all those great monarchs who are the most bloodthirsty tyrants, he was surrounded by vast swarms of vile sycophants, who, in all things, acted only as he prompted. So far as he was able to do so, he had that Council composed of these sycophants, his own pliable instruments. The result was that, in that Council, confusion and violence seem to have been the order of the day. The vilest epithets were hurled back and forth, from one member to another; and, at times, even bishops fell foul of one another, with all the insane fury of drunken desperadoes in a gambling den or a cock-pit.

In his "Rights of the Christian Church," Tindal quotes St. Gregory Nazianzen as saying, in his letter to Procopius, "that he fled all assemblies of bishops, because he never saw a good and happy end of any Council, but that they did rather increase than lessen the evil; that the love of contention and ambition always overcomes their reason." After repeating his determination, never again to attend any council, Nazianzen, in further explanation of this determination, says that it is "because nothing is to be heard there but geese and cranes, who fight

without understanding one another." A fine description, truly, of the men whose vote made Jesus the "Son of God," and the New Testament the "Inspired Word of God!"

Of this same first Council of Nice, Tindal himself says: "And if these accusations and libels which the Bishops at the Council of Nice gave in of one another to the Emperor, were now extant, in all probability, we should have such rolls of scandal, that few would have much reason to boast of the first Ecumenical Council, where, with such heat, passion, and fury, the bishops fell foul on one another, insomuch that had not the Emperor by a trick burnt their church memorials, probably they must have broke up in confusion! After that Council was over, the Bishops made so great a bustle, and disturbance, and were so unruly, that the good Emperor was forced to tell them 'that if they would not be more quiet and peaceable for the future, he would no longer continue his expedition against the Infidels, but must return to keep them in order.'" How do my opponents like this description of the Council upon whose vote they depend for their Scriptures, and for their "Son of God?" And this is the language of an eminent Christian writer, who had thoroughly studied the history of that Council. "Had not the Emperor by a trick burnt their Church memorials"—had the Council actually "broke up in confusion," where would have been the New Testament, the divinity of Jesus, and the Christian Religion, at the present time? And what would our priests have been doing for a livelihood? What a blessed trick that was, to which we owe all these things!

Of these same holy men, Tindal further says: "Indeed, the confusion and disorder were so great amongst them, especially in their synods, that it sometimes came to blows; as, for instance, Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria, cuffed and kicked Flavianus, Patriarch of Constantinople (at the second Synod of Ephesus), with that fury that within three days after he died." Of these same men, Tindal still further says: "For though they were most obstinate as to

power, they were most flexible as to faith, and in their councils complimented the Emperor with whatsoever creeds they had a mind to, and never scrupled to recant what they had before enacted, or to re-enact what they had before recanted. Nay, so variable were they that St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, says that ‘since the Nicene Synod, we do nothing but write creeds; that while we fight about words; while we raise questions about novelties; while we quarrel about things doubtful, and about authors, while we contend in parties, there is almost none that is Christ’s. We decree every year of the Lord a new creed concerning God; nay, every change of the moon our faith is altered.’” A fine description, truly!

And are my opponents absolutely certain that these disorderly and contentious creed-making and creed-changing individuals either could or would, by their strictly partisan voting, infallibly select, for our New Testament, all those books, and those only, which were written by inspiration of God? Could such men, and would they, infallibly assign to God, in their creeds, all his real attributes, and none others? If they either could not, or would not, do these things with infallible correctness; if, from so vast a number of books, all claiming equally high authority, they selected some that were spurious, and rejected some that were genuine, then, my Christian friends, are you not, in accepting their selection, rejecting a portion, at least, of God’s Holy Word? And are you not, at the same time, staking your eternal salvation, in part at least, upon “base forgeries?”

If, however, on the other hand, these men actually could, and would, and did, by their partisan votes, infallibly select all the inspired books and no others, then the case is no better; since, in this case, the Council of Laodicea, which met thirty-eight years afterwards, in rejecting, as they certainly did, a portion of this selection, necessarily rejected genuine writings; and, in selecting, as they certainly did, other writings, they necessarily

selected those that were spurious. Since, then, this latter selection constitutes our New Testament, this book must, of necessity, be destitute of some of the inspired writings, and must, of equal necessity, be in part filled with writings that are spurious. My Christian friends must see that, in any view of the case, they are rejecting a portion of the "Inspired Word of God," and, in its stead, are accepting the "lying words of men." And is this the way in which to attain salvation? It would do no good to attempt to set up the claim of inspiration for those two Councils. They did not set up any such claim for themselves. Beside this, if they had been inspired, would not the members of each of those Councils have agreed among themselves, and would the two councils have so widely disagreed?

If, however, you wish to set up the claim that those books were selected by direct miracle, you can do so with comparative safety. This claim you can easily prove. It is a well-known fact that, at the time of which we are speaking, the priests were more generally engaged, if possible, in the manufacturing of miracles, than they were in the forging of books. Indeed, in those days, the priest who could not, and did not, perform miracles was a total failure. To the credit of the priesthood, however, it must be said that such failures, among them, were extremely rare. While it required much time, and some talent, to forge a book, almost any priest of that time could, and did, on very short notice, perform miracles whenever it was to his interest to do so. And here is the one that was manufactured for the express purpose of proving to the world that all the inspired books, and none others, were selected by the Council of which we are speaking. This miracle is given, in all seriousness, by Pappius. In his "Synodicum of the Council of Nice," he says that the selection of books was made "by placing all the books under a communion table, and, upon the prayers of the Council, the *inspired books jumped* upon the table, while the

false ones remained under." This is certainly very stunning proof, and since, so far as I have been able to learn, it is all you have on the subject, you are heartily welcome to it.

How unfortunate it is, however, that many of these inspired books, thus infallibly selected by miracle, were thrown out thirty-eight years afterwards, by the Council of Laodicea, and their places, among our "Holy Scriptures," supplied by non-jumping books, which, of necessity, were spurious! This leaves us still destitute of a portion of "God's Holy Word," and with our Bible filled, in part, with the "lying words of men." How strange it is that with so high a precedent before them, this latter Council did not also resort to the method of testing the genuineness of books by making them *jump*!

Since the Council of Nice thought of resorting to such a test, they must, of course, have known beforehand that, like rats, genuine books could, and when properly manipulated would, jump upon a table. From the fact, too, that a direct miracle was thus absolutely necessary to distinguish between the genuine and the spurious books, it becomes unpleasantly evident that the "Inspired Word of God" was not, in any visible respect, superior to the "lying word of men."

In his "Ecclesiastical History," Tillemont declares that "without Eusebius, we should scarce have had any knowledge of the history of the first ages of Christianity, or of the authors who wrote at that time." In regard to Eusebius, most other writers, who have occasion to mention him at all, make substantially the same admission. It becomes a matter of the highest importance, then, that we know something of the character for truthfulness of this man upon whom so much depends. Unfortunately, we find that, in this respect, his character was very far from good. Of himself he says: "I have *related* whatever might redound to the *glory*, and I have *suppressed* all that could tend to the *disgrace*, of our *religion*." In doing this he was certainly very prudent as a priest, but was he hon-

est as a historian? He admits that he is not a reliable witness; that he would not tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." He also admits that the condition of the church was much worse than he has made it appear. What, then, must the true condition of the church have been, when, after suppressing all that he thought could tend to disgrace the church, and relating only that which he thought would redound to its glory, he has made it appear that the great body of the church was composed of persons so vicious that they needed to be deceived, and so ignorant that they could be deceived, while the priesthood was composed of consummate liars and deceivers? If all this tends, as he thought it would, to the glory of the church, what must that have been which he suppressed, and which would have tended to disgrace the church? If the very best was so bad as this, what must the worst have been?

In the twelfth Book of his "Evangelical Preparation," he devotes an entire chapter to proving, or attempting to prove, that falsehood ought to be used whenever the interests of the church require it. As the heading of his thirty-first chapter, we also find the following: "How far it may be proper to use falsehood as a medicine, and for the benefit of those who require to be deceived." Before we are justifiable in believing anything that he says, therefore, we must know "how far" he thought it "proper to use falsehood, as a medicine," in his own writings, and to what extent he thought those for whom he wrote required "to be deceived." The Christian writer, Baronius, calls him "the great falsifier of ecclesiastical history—a wily sycophant—a consummate hypocrite, a time-serving persecutor, who had nothing in his known life, or writings, to support the belief that he himself believed in the Christian Religion." And yet this is the man upon whom we almost entirely depend for all our knowledge of the early Christians.

In his thirty-third sermon, St. Augustine says that, while he was Bishop of Hippo Regius, he preached to a whole nation of men and women who had no *heads*, but who had *eyes* in their *bosoms*. It is probably well that these people had no heads; for, if they had possessed these convenient, but as it appears, totally unnecessary, appendages to the human body, they would not have been likely to listen to Augustine's preaching. This same man, whose veracity no Christian can consistently call in question, also says that he preached to another nation in which each individual had but *one eye*, and that in the *middle* of the *forehead*. This famous saint, this pillar of the church, declares—and truthfully, too, no doubt—that these stories of his are as *true* as the *gospel*, and stakes his eternal salvation upon their being facts. Although the good saint does not tell us how high the men of the last named nation were, yet they were doubtless at least a hundred feet high, and were the very same people into whose hands that other equally truthful person, Sindbad the Sailor, declares that he fell in one of his wanderings. Captain Gulliver also declares that, in one of his travels, he, too, fell in with a nation of people similar to these in size. Unlike those described by Augustine, however, Gulliver's giants, whom he calls Brobdignagians, had two good eyes properly placed. Gulliver, whose veracity as a historian no Christian should ever again have the audacity to call in question, beats Augustine a little, since he declares that he also fell in with another nation of people, whom he calls Liliputians, who were only a few inches high. Why, then, has not Gulliver, as well as Augustine, been made a saint?

As quoted by Origen, Celsus says that the early fathers "altered the gospel three or four different times, as if they were drunk, and when pressed by their adversaries recurred to that reading which best suited their purpose." And will my opponents be so kind as to inform us which copy of these "altered" gospels has come down to our own times?

St. Hermas, one of St. Paul's co-laborers, declares that, having confessed himself guilty of deliberately lying to the people, the angel of the Lord, to whom he made the confession, said: "As the lie was up now, he had better keep it up, and as in time it would come to be believed, it would answer as well as truth." How wonderfully convenient to the priesthood was this beautiful doctrine!

St. Hermas probably acquired his habit of pious lying during his association with that greatest of all saints, St. Paul himself, who, when charged with lying, so far from denying the charge, simply proceeds to justify his lying, on the ground that the "glory of God" has thereby been promoted. In Rom. iii, 7, we read: "For if the *truth* of God hath more abounded through my *lie* unto his *glory*, why yet am I also judged as a *sinner*?" Sure enough! Why should he have been "judged as a sinner," when the "lie," for which he was thus "judged," had been told "unto his (God's) glory?" As if it could be a sin to "lie unto" God's "glory!" No wonder the good saint asks this question in a tone of so much surprise and injured innocence!

In 2 Cor. xii, 16, Paul boastingly says to some of his converts: "Being *crafty*, I caught you with *guile*." But what is it to be crafty? Webster says it is to be "skillful in deceiving others." And what is guile? Webster says it is "duplicity" or "deceit." Paul then boasts that being skillful in deceiving others, he had, by means of duplicity, "caught," or inveigled whole congregations of credulous dupes into the church. And with so illustrious a liar and deceiver for their model, how much better could the early fathers of the church have been expected to be than they actually were; and, with all the holy deceivers for their models, how could we expect the priesthood of the present day to be, as a rule, otherwise than they actually are?

In his work entitled, "Use of the Fathers," Daille says that the fathers "made no scruples to *forg*e whole books."

He also says that we find the fathers "saying things which they did not themselves believe. . They are mutually witnesses against each other that they are not to be believed." In his reply to Priestly, Bishop Horsley corroborates this testimony in the following strong language: "Time was when the practice of using *unjustifiable means* to serve a *good cause* was *openly avowed*, and Origen himself was among its *defenders*."

In his "De Script. Interpret.," the celebrated Dr. Whitby complains of Irenæus and Father Papias for having, as he says, "handed down the actions of the apostles and their disciples from paltry rumors, and dubious reports, and as having scandalously deluded the world with fables and lying narrations." And yet this scandalous deluder of the world, Irenæus, is the very man back to whom we can trace the "Four Gospels," but beyond whom we can find no trace whatever to show that they ever had any existence till they came from his own hands. Originating thus, so far as we know, with himself, may not these "Four Gospels," be among the "fables and lying narrations" with which he has so "scandalously deluded the world?" Would he any more scruple to scandalously delude the world with these books than he would with any others? Be all this as it may, however, it is a well established fact that, at the time they were introduced to the world by Irenæus, these "Four Gospels" were denounced as "fables and lying narrations," by a large portion of the Christian Church, who had other and older gospels which they held to be the "Inspired Word of God!" Indeed, so strong proofs of forgery were adduced against these four books, that their advocates found it necessary to silence the witnesses in death.

As I have already stated, no special preference seems to have been given to these four books, until they were adopted by a partial vote of the first Council of Nice, nearly one hundred and fifty years after they were introduced by Irenæus. And now, let me ask, when the Chris-

tian Church was teaching, as of equal authority, some fifty different gospels, which ones of them would we have had to believe in order to escape damnation? Did God never commence damning people for believing in any of the other gospels until after they were all rejected by the vote of a small majority of that disgraceful first Council of Nice? And did he never commence damning them for not believing in these four gospels, until after they were adopted by the vote of a small majority of that same Council? Is God, in his favorite amusement of damning people, controlled by the votes of Councils? If not, on what authority do you teach that we are to be damned, if we reject these four gospels?

On page 479 of the *Eclectic Review* of 1814, we read: "When we consider the number of the gospels, acts, epistles, revelations, traditions, and constitutions which were put in circulation during the first three centuries, and which were *unquestionably spurious*, we find sufficient reason for examining with *care*, and receiving with *extreme caution*, productions attributed to eminent men in the *primitive church*. Some of the early Christians do not appear to have possessed, in some points, a very nice sense of moral obligation. The writing of books under false names, and the circulating of fables, were not accounted violations of duty, or if the impropriety of such conduct was felt, the *end* proposed—the promotion of the Christian cause—was thought to justify the *means* employed for its accomplishment."

In his "Oper," tom. 4, page 113, St. Jerome, the author of the Vulgate, says: "I do not find fault with an error which proceeds from a hatred towards the *Jews*, and a *pious zeal* for the *Christian faith*." St. Gregory Nazianzen, Bishop of Constantinople, seems also to have held this same view. At any rate, he frankly admits to Jerome that, in his opinion, "a little *jargon* is all that is necessary to impose upon the people. The less they comprehend, the more they admire! Our forefathers and doctors of the

church have very often said, not what they *thought*, but, what *circumstances* and *necessity* dictated to them." St. Synesius also declares that "the people are desirous of being deceived. We cannot act otherwise respecting them." This same candid saint further says: "For my own part, to *myself*, I shall always be a *philosopher*, but, in dealing with the *mass* of *mankind*, I shall be a *priest*."

In his "Ecclesiastical History," Mosheim declares of the celebrated Justin Martyr, that "much of what Justin says is *wholly undeserving of credit*." Indeed, in part 2, and chap. iii, of the same history, Mosheim, speaking of the general condition of the church during the fourth century, makes use of the following remarkable language, which is the last evidence I shall adduce in my present lecture: "The interest of virtue and true religion suffered yet more grievously by the monstrous errors that were almost *universally* adopted in this century, and became a source of innumerable calamities and mischiefs in the succeeding ages. The first of these maxims was 'that it was an act of virtue to *deceive* and *lie*, when, by that means, the interest of the church might be promoted;' and the second, equally horrible, though in another point of view, was 'that errors in religion, when maintained and adhered to after *proper* admonition, were punishable with civil penalties and corporeal tortures.' The former of these erroneous maxims was now of long standing. It had been adopted for *some ages past*, and had produced an incredible number of ridiculous fables, fictitious prodigies, and *pious frauds*, to the unspeakable detriment of that glorious cause in which they were employed. And it must be *frankly* confessed that the greatest men and most eminent *saints* of this century were more or less tainted with the infection of this *corrupt* principle, as will appear evident to such as look, with an attentive eye, to their writings and actions. We would willingly except from this charge Ambrose and Hilary, Augustine, Gregory, Nazianzen, and Jerome; but truth, which is more respectable than these venerable

fathers, obliges us to involve them in the general accusation." As translated by Vidal, Mosheim further declares: "At the time when he (Hermias) wrote, it was an established maxim with many of the Christians to avail themselves of *fraud* and *deception*, if it was likely they would conduce towards the attainment of any considerable *good*." "And it was considered," says he again, "that they who made it their *business* to *deceive*, with a view of promoting the cause of truth, were deserving rather of commendation than censure!!" What delightful doctrines for priests!

And this is the testimony of one of the highest authorities of the church, concerning the very men to whom we are indebted for the New Testament, for the doctrine of the Trinity—for all there is of Christianity. And can you, in the annals of the whole world, point out a single religion that originated with men of a worse character for moral honesty? If these bigoted religionists—these professional liars, deceivers, and forgers, believed that the forging and putting forth of such books as are found in the New Testament would conduce to the "interest of the church," were they not, according to their own maxims, bound, as a solemn duty, to forge and put forth those books? Would they not have regarded such an act as in the highest degree meritorious? Would they then have been at all likely to omit the performance of this act? Is it not a universally admitted fact that they did thus piously forge and put forth an "incredible number" of such books? And have I not proved, beyond all reasonable contradiction, that the books of the New Testament were no exceptions to the general rule; that they were mere selections, made by the vote of uninspired and notoriously corrupt men, from among the "incredible number" of "unquestionably spurious" books with which the whole country, at that time, was flooded? And this proof I have made, too, with less than a hundredth part of the testimony that might be adduced to the same effect. O ye blinded, bigoted, intolerant religionists, when will you

cease to regard as the "Inspired Word of God" these "absurd fables"—these "lying narrations?" When will you cease your cruel persecutions of those whose reason and common sense compel them to reject all these things?

And now, in conclusion, I wish to acknowledge that for many of the historical facts contained in this lecture, I am indebted to the researches of other parties, and especially to those of that able writer, Robert Cooper. Except when making direct quotations, I have not thought best to burden this, or any other of my lectures, by giving my authority in every instance. Those who are well posted in regard to the matters under consideration do not need any references to authority; and those who are not thus well posted would not be likely to make any use of those references. I wish also to state that, in all my lectures, I frequently mark, as emphatic, certain words in quoted language, which are not so marked in the original, and that I frequently do this without mentioning the fact at the time.

LECTURE FOURTH

NEW TESTAMENT.—(CONCLUDED.)

IN my last lecture, by the very best of external evidence, I fully proved that the various books of the New Testament, and especially the gospels, are totally unworthy of belief. In my present lecture, I shall, in like manner, by the very best of internal evidence, prove the same fact. Without any further introductory remarks, therefore, I will call your attention to the first chapter of Matthew, in which we find, given by name, twenty-eight generations, from David to Christ, including the names of both these persons. Now, noting the time over which these generations are made to extend, we find that it gives an average of forty years as the age of each of these men, at the time

his son in this line was born. When we reflect that forty years were more than the average length of the entire lives of men during that period, we are bound to admit that Matthew's account is very improbable.

Our priests, it is true, attempt to evade this difficulty, by claiming that Matthew omits several names that should appear in this genealogy. Indeed, by reference to certain portions of the Old Testament, they clearly prove that some such omissions were certainly made. In other words, they clearly prove that Matthew *lies*, when he so positively declares that "*all the generations*" from David to Christ are "*twenty-eight*."

Professing to give the genealogy of the same person, Luke gives by name *forty-three* generations between David and Christ, these two persons being included. Here, then, in the genealogy of the same person, we have an utterly irreconcilable discrepancy of *fifteen generations*. This is truly a bad beginning. Although these two accounts may both be *false*, they can not possibly both be *true*. If "*all the generations*," from David to Jesus, were only "*twenty-eight*," as given by Matthew, there could not possibly have been, at the same time, *forty-three* of them, as given by Luke.

The case becomes much worse, however, when we discover that, with the exception of Jesus, Joseph, and David, these two authors give entirely *different sets* of men. Since it is utterly impossible for the same individual to have descended through both of these lines of ancestors, it is evidently equally impossible for both of these accounts to be true. If, then, either one of them be true, which one is it, and why do you continue to teach the other one, which you know is bound to be false, as a portion of the "Inspired Word of God?" Does God inspire men to write lies?

Matthew positively declares that "*Jacob* begat Joseph the husband of Mary." Luke, however, just as positively declares that Joseph was "*the son of Heli*." This is

indeed, a strange affair: Joseph the son of two different fathers!! Was he a partnership child? Was he so hard to beget that it took two men to beget him? If not, could his mother have been in any doubt as to who his father was? In any case, should not inspiration have set Matthew and Luke right on the subject? Can both accounts be true?

I am aware that certain theologians, with an effrontery that is truly wonderful, attempt to evade this difficulty, as they do most others, by bare-faced assumptions. Without a particle of evidence upon which to base their assumptions, they assume that, although, as Matthew says, "*Jacob begat Joseph*," he did this, not for *himself*, but for his *friend* and *relative*, *Heli*, who was unable to beget *himself* a son, and who, but for this timely assistance, would never have had any son at all. What a beautiful doctrine! With this heavenly example before us, should not every man who can beget sons come promptly to the aid of his neighbors who cannot? It is quite probable, indeed, that this example is more extensively followed than is usually supposed, and that many men who are now happy fathers of hopeful sons, have been made so in this generous manner. Probably every one of you can think of one or two cases of this kind.

Having thus, as they claim, settled this question, these theologians, with a great deal of self-complacency, proceed to inform us that Matthew gives Joseph's genealogy through the line of *Jacob*, his *begetter*, while Luke gives his genealogy through the line of *Heli*, his *father*. Again we are ready to exclaim, Beautiful doctrine!

But why are these two genealogies given at all? Simply to make it appear, if possible, that to Jesus are applicable certain vague passages of the Old Testament, usually called prophecies. These so-called prophecies seem to relate to some important personage of the *seed* of *David*. In order to make these so-called prophecies seem to be applicable to Jesus, therefore, he had to be made a *lineal*

descendant of David. To establish for Jesus this necessary descent is the common object of these two genealogies, each of which claims to be the true, and, from the very nature of the case, the only true, line through which he derived his descent from David. It is evident, then, that the one of these lines through which he did not descend is a "base forgery," palmed off upon the too credulous people as a portion of the "Inspired Word of God."

It is evident, too, that if Jesus did not *literally* descend through *either* of these *lines*—if he was not *literally* a *lineal descendant of David*, both these genealogies are bound to be, of necessity, "base forgeries." If, however, either of these genealogies be true—if Jesus was, in fact, a *lineal descendant of David*, then, of necessity, he was a *mere man*, as the earlier Christians held that he was. As I stated in my last lecture, most of these Christians were Jews, and differed from other Jews only in holding that in Jesus had come the Messiah expected by the Jewish nation. This Messiah having to be of the seed of David, these Christian Jews were especially anxious to establish for Jesus a literal descent, as a man, from David. If Jesus was not thus descended from David—if he was begotten by a *ghost*, as our priests now teach that he was, and not by a *man*—not by a *lineal descendant of David*, then to him cannot possibly be applied those so-called prophecies in question. It cannot strengthen the claims of Jesus any to show, by certain genealogies, that certain other persons, in no way related to him by blood, were descended from David. As well might you attempt to strengthen those claims by giving the pedigree of Balaam's ass.

From all this, it is evident that my opponents must either give up the doctrine that the so-called prophecies in question refer to Jesus—must admit that both the genealogies which make Jesus a descendant of David are forgeries—or else give up the paganistic doctrine that Jesus was *literally* the *son of God*. I defy them to escape from this dilemma into which they have fallen by absurdly

attempting to apply to the same individual the so-called prophecies of the strictly monotheistic Jews, and the polytheistic pagan doctrine of demi-gods.

In Matt. i, 11, we read: "And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon." By reference to the last two chapters of 2 Chronicles, however, we learn that Josias died over twenty years before "they were carried away to Babylon," and that he never "begat Jechonias and his brethren" at all. If, then, the author of Chronicles be worth anything as a witness, Matthew again stands before us a convicted liar.

Strangely enough, Mark and John are entirely silent in regard to the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus. This strange silence on their part is extremely unfortunate, since the accounts given of these important matters by Matthew and Luke are so hopelessly at variance with each other that we find it difficult to believe either one of them.

While Luke has the "annunciation" made to Mary herself, in advance of conception, Matthew has it made in a dream to Joseph, her lover, after she had been "found with child." While Luke has Mary and her friends, from the very beginning, all well aware of her condition, and all highly pleased with it—while he has no need of a dream to set Joseph or any one else right on the subject—Matthew has her, like a guilty woman, conceal her condition, as long as possible—has her at last detected, or "found with child," and then has her totally unable to explain, to the satisfaction of her lover at least, how she came to be in that rather unmaidenly condition. Hence the necessity, on Matthew's part, of having Joseph dream that she was with child of a certain ghost who, if he had ever before been heard of at all, had certainly never before appeared in the doubtful role of putative father of an unmarried woman's baby.

From Matthew's account, it is evident that the finding of Mary "with child" created a good deal of scandal. So

much, at any rate, that, previous to his dream, Joseph had no doubt at all that she was a guilty woman. If either she herself, or her friends for her, attempted any explanation of her embarrassing condition, that would tend to exonerate her from the imputation of guilt, it is evident that Joseph did not give the slightest credit to that explanation. Although said to be a very "just man," he nevertheless fully intended to have Mary punished for the grave offense of being "with child" by some party to himself unknown. The punishment, too, which he proposed to inflict upon her seems to have been nothing less than death. Being her betrothed husband, he had a legal right to inflict this punishment upon her, for the offense of which she appeared to be undeniably guilty, and the expressions "to make her a public example," and "to put her away privily," seem to refer simply to different modes of putting her to death, or out of the way.

Let the proposed punishment have been what it may, however, it is evident that Joseph did not, for a moment, think of letting her escape it. He simply hesitated as to whether her punishment should be "public," as "an example" to others, or private, as a mere satisfaction to the laws which she had transgressed. "But while he thought on these things [these two different modes of punishment], behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." This dream changed Joseph's whole intended course of procedure. From this fact, it is evident that, previous to his dream, he had not the slightest suspicion that she was "with child of the Holy Ghost." Indeed, had he already been in possession of this fact (?) he would not have needed to have it communicated to him in a dream, and would not have thought of such a thing as making "her a public example," or even of putting "her away privily." On the contrary, he would have thought—as, after his dream, he

did think—only of honoring her as one favored of Heaven, above all others of womankind.

In the latter part of the eighteenth verse of this same chapter, we read that Mary “was found with child of the Holy Ghost.” From what I have just said, however, concerning Joseph’s belief in her guilt, and his intention to punish her, it is evident that neither Mary, for herself, nor those who “found” her “with child,” for her, had as yet set up any such claim as Holy-Ghost pregnancy. At any rate, it is evident that, if any such claim had been set up, Joseph, who knew the parties and the circumstances much better than we possibly can know them, had not a particle of faith in the justness of that claim. In his eyes, Mary was still guilty, and he still intended to punish her. The phrase “of the Holy Ghost,” then, which we now find at the end of the already complete sentence which I have quoted, is evidently a forgery, as many Bible critics admit that it is, and was added, at a later date, to strengthen the proof of the divine paternity of Jesus.

If the fact that her unborn child was of the “Holy Ghost” had been already established, by Mary herself, or by those who found her “with child,” why did Joseph have to learn this fact in a dream? Was not he, above all others, the very person whom Mary and her friends would be most anxious to have convinced of her innocence? Did not her very life depend upon his being thus convinced? If, then, Mary and her friends had had a particle of proof that her pregnancy was the work of the “Holy Ghost”—whoever he was—would they not at once have presented those proofs to Joseph? Would they have left him, as they undeniably did, to believe her a guilty woman, worthy of death? Would they have left him, as they unmistakably did, to revolve in his own mind the mode of punishment by which he should make her expiate her unpardonable offense? Would they have left her life as well as her reputation to depend upon the extremely

uncertain chance of his having a dream that would acquit her of guilt?

From all this, is it not clear that Mary was simply "found with child," and that the phrase "of the Holy Ghost" is an unauthorized addition made by the hand of a forger? Indeed, how could the person who found her "with child" know that her child was "of the Holy Ghost?" Were the symptoms of "Holy-Ghost" pregnancy very different from those of ordinary pregnancy? If they were, from what previous cases of "Holy-Ghost" pregnancy had this marked difference of symptoms become known? If they were not, or if the difference had not, from previous cases, been made known, how could the party in question possibly know that this was a case of genuine "Holy-Ghost" pregnancy? Who, besides Mary herself, could possibly know with absolute certainty how she came to be in a pregnant condition?

From all these things, it becomes an indisputable fact that, at best, the whole matter—the whole basis of the Christian Religion—rests upon the totally unsupported word of a deeply interested party—of an obscure young woman, who, without being a wife, "was found with child," and whose life depended upon her creating the impression that her unmaidenly condition was the result, not of crime, but of some supernatural agency. And of how much more value, in such a case, was her unsupported word than would be the unsupported word to the same effect of any one of the young women of our own neighborhood, who might, in the same way, chance to be "found with child?" As to Joseph's dream, that amounts to nothing at all. The very fact that it was a dream is proof positive that it was not a reality. Dreams are now well known to be simply the thoughts or creations of the partially dormant mind of the dreamer himself. If Joseph really had seen an angel, and heard him speak these things, they would have been realities, and not a portion of the "baseless fabric of a dream." As it was, the angel, the communication, and all,

were nothing more nor less than dream material—the creations of Joseph's own partially dormant mind.

In Matt. ii, 1–3, we read: “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.” Did this language profess to be the beginning of a novel, I should have but few objections to offer against it. When, however, it professes to be authentic history, it certainly becomes open to very grave criticisms. Who were these wise men, and in what did their wisdom consist? From how far east of Jerusalem did they come? Were they Jews or foreigners? If Jews, why does the author so pompously declare that they “came from the east?” Judea extended only a very few miles east of Jerusalem—too few, by far, for the inhabitants on its eastern border to differ, in any respect, from the rest of its inhabitants. Of what advantage, then, was the fact that those so-called wise men came “from the east?” Since they left home after the birth of Jesus, and yet reached Bethlehem while he was still in the manger, they could not, by the modes of travel then in use, have come from any very distant country. At most, they could have come from only a few days' journey east of Jerusalem. If, then, they came from beyond the eastern boundary of Judea, they must, of necessity, have come from the deserts of Arabia, which were inhabited then, as they are now, by semi-barbarous tribes, among whom wise men never prevailed. That they were from no distant country is also evident from the fact that they spoke the same language as the Jews.

If those men were Jews, was it any mark of wisdom in them to go strolling about the streets of “Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews,” and declaring that they had “come to worship him?” Could

“wise men,” from a dozen miles east of Jerusalem, have supposed that the people of that city already knew of the obscure birth, in a manger at Bethlehem, of Mary’s illegitimate child, and that they had already acknowledged him as “born King of the Jews?” From the language of their inquiry, those so-called “wise men” undeniably took all this for granted. Would really “wise men” have acted thus? Would really “wise men,” if Jews, have dared to come thus openly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to the king, and to all the people, a successor to the Jewish throne; a successor, too, of low and illegitimate birth? Would not such a proclamation have constituted high treason, and would not the persons who made it have been put to death as traitors?

If, when no one knew of the birth of any new pretender to the throne of England, a small band of men from a few miles east of London should go strolling about the streets of that city, saying, “Where is he that is born king of England,” and declaring that they had “come to worship him,” would they be regarded as “wise men?” Would they not, on the contrary, be far more likely to be arrested on the charge of insanity? And would their case be rendered any the better when it became known that their newborn “king of England” was the illegitimate child of a young woman of the lower class; that he was born, and was still lying among the filth of a stable, or a damp cellar; that he was one whose condition in life would forever unfit him for any high position; that he was one whose condition in life would render him extremely likely to live as a vagrant, and to die as a malefactor? And were “wise men,” in Herod’s time, wont to do things which none but idiots or insane persons would do at the present time? Was not human nature the same then that it is now? Do you, then, really believe that “wise men,” like idiots, or insane persons, ever thus perambulated the streets of Jerusalem? Does not your knowledge of human nature—does not your common sense—teach you that, so far from

being founded on facts, this whole story is a pure fiction—a highly wrought Arabian tale?

If those so-called “wise men” were not Jews, of what nationality were they? As I have already shown, they could not have come from any great distance. And would “wise men” from any of the neighboring gentile tribes, have been likely to come thus to Jerusalem and proclaim a new “King of the Jews?” Would they have been likely to “have come to worship” this supposed new “King?” Did the Jews ever “worship” their own kings? And did any of the gentile tribes ever “worship” the kings of the Jews? Were not the Jews intensely hated by all their neighbors? Would those so-called “wise men,” after having thus worshiped a Jew, ever have dared to return into their own country? You may be damned if you do not believe this absurd story; but I will be damned if I do believe it!

Besides all these things, that star also requires a passing notice. Since it appeared in the east, and since those so-called “wise men” were journeying toward the west, how did it manage to go “before them,” as we are assured that it did? And how did they know that the appearance of this star indicated the birth of a “King of the Jews?” Was such a star accustomed to appear, “in the east,” on the birth of each successive “King of the Jews,” and did no such star ever appear on any other occasion? There must have been some fixed and well-known law that governed the appearance of such stars; otherwise, those so-called “wise men” would not, on the occasion in question, have had any idea as to what was indicated by the appearance of the star. And since those men had this star to guide them right to the spot “where Jesus was,” why did they need to stop at Jerusalem, and go strolling about the streets, “saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews?” Why did they inquire, too, of parties who did not know, and who, under the circumstances, could not

reasonably have been expected to know anything at all of the matter?

Besides all this, since there are no other kinds of stars, that star must, of necessity, have been either a fixed star or a planet. From the fact, however, that it moved before those so-called "wise men," it evidently could not have been a fixed star. Of necessity, then, it must have been a planet. But all planets belong to some system; and, in fixed orbits, revolve, unceasingly, around the sun, or around some other planetary body. From the very nature of its own constitution, and of the forces that are constantly bearing upon it, a planet is utterly incapable of ever ceasing in its motions, of ever moving in straight lines, or of ever making sudden or angular changes in the direction of its motion. Of necessity, its path is either circular or elliptical.

From the fact that the star or planet under consideration was plainly visible to the naked eye, it could not have belonged to any other than the solar system. Which one of the solar planets, then, was it? What was its size, its distance from the sun, its rate of motion, etc. While all the other planets move from west to east, why did it move in the opposite direction? What caused it, in direct violation of all the laws of planetary motion, to move in straight lines, to make angular turns in its course, and, at last, to stand still? Why did it, unlike all the other planets, never appear except on the birth of a new "King of the Jews?" Where was it all the balance of the time? What was its composition? What finally became of it? Why has no other author ever seen fit to notice this truly wonderful astronomical phenomenon? On what authority does the author of the Book of Matthew relate this utterly incredible story?

I am aware that, with the effrontery for which they are usually so notorious, theologians have attempted to evade all these difficulties by unblushingly assuming, without a particle of proof, that what Matthew calls a "*star*" was no

star at all—that it was simply something that *looked* like a *star*, a *phosphorescent* or *electrical light*, a *jack-o'-lantern*, an *optical illusion*, or something of that kind, which was miraculously moved along near the surface of the earth, in advance of those so-called “wise men.” This jack-o'-lantern theory, however, involves as many difficulties as does the real star theory. Besides this, since Matthew asserts positively that the light in question was a “*star*,” it is evident that whatever tends to prove that it was *not* a *star*, necessarily tends to prove him a *liar*. Indeed, in any view of the case, he stands before us a convicted liar. If there was no “*star*” at all involved in the case, then he certainly lies when he asserts that there *was* one involved in it. If there *was* a “*star*” involved in the case, then he just as certainly lies when he describes it as moving in a *straight line*, *westward* to *Jerusalem*; as there *turning* at a *right angle* with its former course, and moving southward along the route usually traveled by men to Bethlehem, and as there *standing still* directly over a certain stable.

In order to have appeared as such, that “star” must have been many millions of miles from the earth; and, in order to adopt its apparent motions to the actual motions of the earth, it must have been hurled through space with the inconceivable velocity of millions of miles in an hour. And all this it did, too, simply that it might guide a small party of men in their perfectly useless visit to a certain stable, in which lay the new-born babe of a young woman of rather doubtful reputation. Could not God have told them, at once, where the babe was?

If all these things were true, why does not Luke notice them? Does he not profess to give a full history of the same period of Jesus's life? Why does he notice the unimportant visit of a party of ignorant shepherds, from the immediate neighborhood, and yet entirely fail to notice the far more important visit of the “wise men from the east?” And why does he, while professing to give a minute description of all the events, in any way connected with

the conception and the birth of Jesus, entirely fail to notice the most important event of all, the appearance of that wonderful "star?" If so astounding an astronomical phenomenon had actually appeared, would he not have been sure to mention the fact?

In Matt. ii, 12, we read: "And being warned of God in dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." This is spoken of the same so-called "wise men" of whom I have been speaking. From the fact that, from Judea where they then were, "they departed into their own country," it is evident that they did not belong to the Jewish nation. On this subject, however, I have already said enough. I notice this passage now, only because of the dream that is mentioned in it. Did all those men, at the same time, dream that same dream, or did one of them alone dream it for the whole company? If all of them at once dreamed it, would not Matthew, who deals extensively in the wonderful, have been sure to notice so remarkable a coincidence? If, however, only one of them dreamed it, how could the others know that it was "of God?" How many of you would believe your next neighbor, if he should claim that a very ordinary and natural dream of his was "of God?" How many of you would believe the same thing if you were to tell it yourselves? And can the mere hearsay word of that so-called "wise man," of whom you know nothing at all, be worth any more than would be your own word, or that of your neighbor?

In the dream itself there was nothing remarkable. Under the circumstances it was very natural. Those men, knowing Herod's extremely jealous and vengeful disposition, could hardly have helped feeling some misgivings in regard to the propriety of returning to him after they had been worshiping the low-born child whom they themselves had proclaimed as "born King of the Jews." They could hardly have helped revolving in their own minds the propriety of returning "into their own country another way."

Falling asleep with these thoughts upon their minds, it would have been strange if similar thoughts had not occurred to some of them in their dreams. How, then, could even the dreamer himself have known that his dream was a warning "of God?" Did this very natural and common-place dream bear God's trade-mark upon it? And how does it happen that, in giving the history of the birth and infancy of Jesus, Matthew mentions no less than five miraculous dreams, while Luke, in giving the history of the same things, mentions no dreams at all? Who told all these dreams to Matthew? And since Luke missed all these five dreams, which are important portions of the "Word of God," may not Matthew also have missed many other similar dreams which were equally important portions of the "Word of God?" What proof have we that Matthew succeeded in collecting the thousandth part, even, of the dreams that were "of God?"

In Matt. xii, 13-15, we learn that, being warned of God—in a "dream," of course—Joseph took Mary and her child, and fled by night into Egypt, where he remained until after the death of Herod. This flight is represented to have taken place immediately after the departure of the so-called "wise men." It must have taken place, therefore, from Bethlehem, and while Jesus was only a few days old. This, as you plainly see, renders it utterly impossible for Joseph and his family to have visited Jerusalem until after their return from Egypt. Indeed, if they ever visited Jerusalem at all, they could not have done so for a long time after their return. This fact we learn from the twenty-second verse, in which we are informed that, on coming out of Egypt, in obedience to a warning given in a "dream," Joseph was afraid to return into Judea; and that, being warned in still another "dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee, and dwelt in a city called Nazareth."

The reason assigned for this flight into Egypt is that Herod, jealous and alarmed on account of the incipient

fame of Mary's new-born babe, desired to have it put to death. So determined, indeed, is he represented as having been, to make sure of the destruction of Jesus, that he "sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under." Why he thus "slew all the children," we are not informed. It seems to me that he might have safely spared the females. Was he afraid that Jesus might be a female, and that this female might become "King of the Jews?" Can we, on any other than this extremely absurd hypothesis, conceive why, in seeking the life of Jesus alone, he should thus have slain several thousand female infants?

The reason assigned for Joseph's being afraid to return into Judea is, that he feared the new king, Archelaus, Herod's son, might have designs against the life of Jesus. How long Archelaus lived, I do not know; but, during his lifetime, of whatever length it may have been, Joseph and his family, according to Matthew's account, would certainly not have ventured to visit Jerusalem. And now let us see how this whole account agrees with that given by the equally inspired Luke.

In Luke ii, 21, 22, we read; "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord." Further on, we learn that, on this same occasion, sacrifices for Mary's purification were publicly offered in the temple; that Jesus was publicly presented to the Lord; that the aged Simeon and the prophetess Anna held a grand rejoicing over the child; and that, when all these things were accomplished Joseph and his family departed, not to flee "by night into Egypt," but to journey safely, in open day, to their own home in Galilee. Luke also informs us that, so far from being, as Matthew represents

him, afraid to return into Judea, Joseph and his family "went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover." Thus Luke not only entirely omits all mention of the flight of Joseph and his family into Egypt, but gives us no occasion for such a flight, and no possible room, in the history of this family, in which such a flight could have taken place. He also entirely omits to mention the horrible slaughter of infants, mentioned by Matthew, and gives us no occasion, no room, for any such slaughter.

Thus you see that, at the very same time that Matthew has Joseph and his family fleeing "by night into Egypt," to escape the vengeance of Herod, Luke has them going publicly to Jerusalem, Herod's own capital. You also see that, at the very same time that Matthew has Jesus secreted, for safety, in Egypt, Luke has him publicly exhibited in Jerusalem. You likewise see that, at the very same time that Matthew has Herod butchering many thousands of infants, for the express purpose of insuring the destruction of Jesus, Luke has Jesus publicly offered to the Lord, in the temple, at Herod's very door. You finally see that, at the very same time that Matthew has Joseph afraid to return at all into Judea, Luke has him and his family go safely up "to Jerusalem, every year at the feast of the passover."

And now, my friends of the priesthood, have any of you faces so hard that, without either laughing or blushing, you can look an intelligent person steadily in the face, and declare that you sincerely believe both of these utterly irreconcilable stories? When talking confidentially among yourselves, do you ever pretend to believe them both? You know very well that you do not. You know very well that, on such occasions, you do not pretend to believe very much of anything that you preach. You know very well that, in faith, you are thorough infidels; in practice, shameless hypocrites. You know very well that, before the people, you pretend to accept, as the "Word of God," absurd and contradictory stories which you yourselves

fully believe to be utterly unworthy of credit. You know very well that, for this hypocrisy, you excuse yourselves on the ground that the people need to be deceived—on the ground that, although you never swallow a morsel of such food yourselves, you must, nevertheless, as shepherds, feed your flocks on such food as they like to eat, and as will cause them to make the finest yield, to yourselves, of wool and of mutton. These questions and remarks I address to those members of the priesthood only who, by reason of their great learning and their vast mental powers, stand at the head of their profession. To these parties, all that I have said is fully applicable. None of these parties believe any of the absurdities they preach. Not so, however, with those members of the priesthood who, by reason of their little learning, and their feeble mental powers, stand low in their profession. Many of these parties doubtless do believe all the absurdities they preach.

And now I have a few words more to say concerning that horrible massacre which Matthew charges Herod with having committed upon the infants of Bethlehem. This city, together with “all the coasts thereof,” was quite an important place. So much so, indeed, that according to the estimates of some authors, the number of infants massacred, on the occasion in question, could not have been less than fourteen thousand. So wholesale, so cruel, and so utterly inexcusable a massacre would, undeniably, have been one of the most notable events in the whole history of the Jewish Nation, if not of the world. If, then, any such unparalleled massacre ever occurred at all, is it not exceedingly strange that no Jewish historian ever noticed it? Is it not exceedingly strange that so notable an event was never noticed by any historian of any nationality, except Matthew, and not even by him until several generations after it is said to have occurred?

This, too, was in the Augustan age, in which learning flourished, and able writers were numerous. At that time,

and in that country, such a massacre would have been regarded in very nearly the same light in which a similar massacre would be regarded, if committed to-day, in Europe, or the United States. It would have created a widespread and intense excitement, a universal and unutterable horror. It would have caused a fearful insurrection of the Bethlehemites, if not of the whole Jewish Nation. After the perpetration of so atrocious a crime, Herod would not have been permitted to live one week. Besides this, a considerable army would have been required to accomplish so immense a massacre. Had only a few hundred men undertaken to accomplish it, they would have been annihilated by the Bethlehemites, who, in the strength of desperation, would have risen, *en masse*, to defend the lives of their little ones. But had Herod, at that time, an army of any considerable strength? Was not Judea, at that time, a Roman province? Was not Herod himself subject to the authority of the Roman Governor? Without that Governor's permission, would he have dared to send out a military expedition of any kind, and especially for the wholesale butchery of infants? Would that Governor have given him permission to commit so horrible a massacre? Were not many of Herod's soldiers Bethlehemites? Would these have helped butcher their own infants? And would the rest of the Jewish officers and soldiers have butchered the infants of their brethren of Bethlehem? Matthew speaks of this massacre as of an affair so common-place that it excited no indignation, no commotion, no comment, even, of any kind. But can such a story be a true one? Could such a massacre be committed in Europe, or in the United States, to-day, without creating any excitement at all, and without being noticed by a single writer of the present age? If such a thing would be utterly impossible now, as you know that it certainly would be, how could it have been possible, in the almost equally enlightened age of Herod and Augustus? Besides all this, is it not now a well-known fact that, cen-

turies before the birth of Jesus, this very same story was told of Kansa and Crishna of India?

Speaking of the crucifixion, Matthew says that, "from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour;" that "the vail of the temple was rent in twain" from the top to the bottom; that "the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;" that "the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." If these events ever did thus occur, all at one time, they indisputably constituted the most remarkable coincidence of wonderful phenomena ever known in the history of the whole world. Why, then, do not any other writers, and especially the other three Evangelists, say a word about these things? You pretend that some of these Evangelists were disciples of Jesus, and were present at his crucifixion. Admitting that such was the fact, these Evangelists must themselves have been eye-witnesses of all that occurred on that occasion. If, then, they witnessed all the wonderful phenomena described by Matthew, is it not exceedingly strange that not one of them says a single word about any of these things? Besides all this, would not the Jews and the Romans, seeing all these wonderful things—especially the rising from the dead of the bodies of the saints—have been at once converted to the new religion, Christianity? Far gone in unbelief as I am, I would at once become a believer, were I, on such an occasion, to witness so unparalleled a combination of wonderful phenomena.

But did these things ever really occur? If they did, whose bodies were those that thus so unceremoniously left their only proper places, the graves, and went into the city to frighten the women and the children? I am not aware that either the Jews or the pagans ever had any such things as saints; and since, previous to that very day, Christianity had not had any existence, it was certainly very early for Christian saints to come popping up in so

unceremonious a manner. Indeed, I cannot learn that sainthood was invented and brought into use, until a century or more after the time in question. Who, then, could those upstart saints have been? How many of them were there? Who saw them rise and go "into the holy city?" Who were the "many" to whom they "appeared," after their arrival in the city? How were they received by their former friends? Had they real, living bodies composed of flesh, blood, and bones? Had they stomachs, lungs, intestines, etc.? Had they appetites and passions, like those of other men? Were they clothed, or did they go stalking about naked? If clothed, where did they get their clothes? Were their old clothes resurrected with their old bodies? Had they any spirits, or did they consist entirely of the "bodies" which "arose?" If they had spirits, whence did those spirits come? Had these, too, like their bodies, been sleeping in the grave, or did they just happen to be strolling back from heaven, in the very nick of time, to re-enter their old bodies? And what became of them? Did they remain among men, and again die, or did they then, bodies and all, go scrambling up to heaven, whence, without bodies, they had just come? If they then went to heaven, did they go clothed, or naked? Finally, how far, and in what direction from the earth did they have to go in order to reach heaven?

Matthew says that, on a certain occasion, two men possessed of devils came out of the tombs and met Jesus, who cast out of them a legion of devils. What these devils were, we are not informed. We are informed, however, that they spoke and reasoned like men, and that they were regularly organized into a military body called a legion. In their size, however, and in their mode of living, they were probably quite similar to those animalculæ which we now call trichinæ. They could not have been much larger.

From the ambiguity of his language, Matthew leaves us in doubt as to whether the men owned the devils or the

devils owned the men. It was probably a kind of mutual association by the terms of which the devils were to furnish the men with wit, while the men were to furnish them with food and lodging. Matthew also fails to inform us how many legions were left in the two men, after this legion had been ordered out. He does inform us, however, that at their own request the devils that were cast out on this occasion were permitted to enter into a herd of swine; and that, as soon as these poor devils were comfortably established in their new quarters, the swine took it into their silly heads to run down a steep place into the sea and drown themselves.

Luke says that, on this occasion, there was only one man met Jesus, and that he came out of the city, and not out of the tombs. Luke says, too, that the swine were drowned in a lake, and not in the sea. He also says that this event occurred in the country of the Gadarenes, and not, as Matthew has it, in that of the Gergesenes. And now, in order to escape damnation, which one of these monstrously absurd and utterly irreconcilable accounts must we believe?

Whether composed of men or of devils, a legion, like a regiment with us, was a regularly organized military body, containing about five thousand individuals, and commanded by an officer of a particular rank. How large, then, could these devils have been if so great a number of them found comfortable lodgings and the means of subsistence inside of one man's body; and that, too, without visibly increasing his size, changing his shape, or impeding his motions. Am I not justifiable in supposing that they were quite similar to *trichinæ*? The fact, too, that they wished to enter into the swine, which is the favorite dwelling place of *trichinæ*, still further confirms my opinion. Be all this as it may, however, of what form were those devils? In what part of the man's body did they reside? Upon what did they subsist? What was their

port of entry? What were their occupations? What was their form of government? Who was their chief ruler? Who was commander-in-chief of the legion that were ordered out? From which end of the man did they take their departure? At which end of the swine did they make their entrance? What was their order of march—by twos, by fours, or by platoons? Were they all males, and all of the same age, or were both sexes and different ages represented among them? Why did they desire to enter into the swine at all? To what extent did their entrance into the swine affect the pork market? Finally, when the swine were all drowned, what became of these poor, persecuted devils? Were they, too, all drowned? I suppose they must have been, since they were never again heard of; and since devils, not being at all used to water, would naturally drown very easily.

And now, let me ask, can any of you be so totally blinded by priestcraft—so utterly bereft of reason and common sense—as to really believe that a whole nation of intelligent beings ever did thus live, and carry on a regular government inside of the body of a man or of a hog? If your priests can succeed in making you believe this monstrously absurd and utterly incredible man-hog-and-devil tale, what is there so absurd or so incredible that they could not make you believe it?

Matthew says that, on a certain occasion, Jesus healed two blind men. Speaking of this same occasion, Luke declares that there was only one blind man healed. Which tells the truth? Matthew says that Judas died by hanging himself. The author of Acts says that he died from the effects of a fall. Can both accounts be true? Did the unfortunate Judas actually die thus at two different times, in two different places, and from two different causes? The great commentator, Dr. Clarke, discredits both of these accounts, and labors to prove that Judas died of diarrhœa. Poor fellow! Two previous deaths, one from hanging, and one from falling, were indeed enough to

bring upon him the diarrhœa, from which, Clarke says, he finally died.

Matthew says that Judas gave back to the priests, the money which he had received for betraying his master, and that, with it, they bought the potter's field. The author of Acts declares that Judas kept this money, and, with it, bought himself a field. Can both accounts be true? Matthew says that the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus, both reviled him. Luke says that only one of them did this, and that the other one rebuked him for so doing. Which account is true? Matthew says that, on a certain occasion, Jesus went up into a mountain and sat down; and, while sitting there, preached a certain noted sermon, usually called the "Sermon on the Mount." Luke, however, declares that Jesus did not preach this sermon sitting in the mount; that he first came down from the mountain, and then preached it standing in a plain. Can both accounts be true?

Matthew says that, on a certain occasion, Jesus sent two of his disciples to steal, or, at least, to take without leave, two asses; and that, when they had done this, he rode both of these asses, at once, into Jerusalem. John, however, flatly contradicts this ridiculous story, by declaring that there was only one real ass concerned in the affair, and that Jesus himself "found" it, and sat "thereon." John probably expects the reader, who, in fancy, believingly accompanies Jesus into Jerusalem, to constitute the other ass. But which account is true?

Matthew informs us that, on a certain occasion, the devil—who seems to have been a very intelligent, courteous, and enterprising old gentleman of immense wealth—first took Jesus up into the temple, and then up "into an exceeding high mountain," from the summit of which at one view, they beheld "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." That must, indeed, have been "an exceeding high mountain." What mountain was it, and how far was it from Jerusalem? Luke says that the visit

to this "exceeding high mountain" was made first, and that to the temple, afterwards. Can both accounts be true?

John says that the first visit to the sepulcher of Jesus was made by Mary Magdalene alone, who came "when it was yet dark." Matthew says that the first visit was made by two Marys, who came "as it began to dawn." Mark says that the first visit was made by three women, who came "at the rising of the sun." Luke says that the first visit was made by at least five women, who came "very early in the morning." Are all four of these contradictory accounts the "Inspired Word of God?"

John says that when his one woman arrived at the sepulcher, she saw nobody at all. Matthew says that when his two women arrived at the sepulcher, they saw "the angel of the Lord" sitting down, on the outside of the sepulcher. Mark says that when his three women arrived at the sepulcher, "they saw a young man sitting" down, on the inside of the sepulcher. Luke says that when his five or more women arrived at the sepulcher, they saw "two men" standing up, on the inside of the sepulcher. Can all four of these contradictory accounts be true?

John has his one woman make a second visit to the sepulcher, in company with Peter and another disciple, and has her, on this occasion, see "two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." What is a little strange about this affair is that Mary, who merely "stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher," from the outside, should have seen angels, while the two disciples, who "went into the sepulcher," saw nothing but two bundles of linen clothes. Did Mary mistake these two bundles of linen for "two angels in white," or did the two disciples mistake the "two angels in white" for two bundles of linen? If the mistake was on Mary's side, as was most probable—if, instead of "two angels in white, sitting the

one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain"—if, instead of being what she, peering into the interior gloom, from the outside, mistook them for, these two objects were what the disciples, on a closer inspection, pronounced them to be, merely two bundles of linen, then, of necessity, Jesus, when he rose from the dead, must have gone away entirely naked, his old clothes having been taken from him, by the soldiers who crucified him. His being thus naked, is probably the reason why he was always so shy in showing himself after his resurrection. Did he finally go to heaven naked? If not, what kind of clothes did he wear, and where did he get them? It is a little strange, too, that Peter and the other disciples should have felt so little interest in the discoveries they had made that, instead of reporting these things to their brethren, they very unconcernedly "went away again unto their own home." This looks as if they knew that their brethren needed no information on the subject—as if the disciples might have been at the sepulcher, during the night, and, after frightening or bribing the guards, might have fixed up things there to suit themselves, leaving it to poor, ignorant, and fanatical women to make and report discoveries in the morning.

Matthew says that the appearance of "the angel of the Lord" was so terrible that, "for fear of him, the keepers did shake, and become as dead men." And yet while these Roman soldiers—those very bravest of men—are represented as being thus frightened by a certain white object that appeared in the morning twilight, until they became "as dead men," the two women are represented as not being at all frightened at this same object. Is such an account credible? Every soldier will pronounce it simply ridiculous. No white object seen in the morning twilight can so frighten a body of veteran soldiers as to make them "become as dead men." The story is a slander upon all soldiers.

Besides all this, is it credible that those soldiers, accustomed as they were to the most rigid discipline, and, at that time, acting under the strictest orders to guard that sepulcher from all intrusion, would thus, in direct violation of their orders, permit men and women, unchallenged, to pass, at pleasure, to and from that sepulcher? To the intelligent soldier the idea of such conduct on the part of those guards is simply ridiculous. Admitting, however, that they did act in this very unsoldier-like manner, the case becomes still worse; since, on this hypothesis, the sepulcher was virtually without any guard at all, and the body of Jesus might easily have been carried away, by designing parties, just as the Jews, who investigated the matter, declared that it was. If, as John informs us, those recreant guards, "when it was yet dark," and from that time on, did thus suffer men to enter that sepulcher at pleasure, would they not have done the same thing during the night? According to Matthew's account, we have their own testimony that they did do this, and not a particle of testimony that they did not. The sepulcher, then, being thus open to whomsoever might see fit to enter it, the disappearance of the body of Jesus occurred, almost as a matter of course, under the circumstances, and hence constituted no proof at all that he had arisen from the dead. Thus by destroying the character for integrity of those soldiers, theologians have fatally injured their own cause.

Matthew says that, in order to account for the disappearance of the body of Jesus from the sepulcher, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews "gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept." This passage alone is sufficient to brand the whole story as a base forgery, and a very clumsy one at that; as a forgery either gotten up by a very ignorant man, or else for the benefit of very ignorant people.

Every person who is at all acquainted with the military usages of the Romans, knows that immediate death was the

penalty of a soldier when found guilty of the offense of sleeping at his post, while on guard duty. Similar necessities have given rise to similar usages in all other nations. The lives of the whole army, as well as the safety of the whole nation, almost constantly depend upon the fidelity with which the guards perform their duties. By the military laws of all nations, therefore, sleeping at his post while on guard, has always been regarded and punished as one of the gravest offenses a soldier can commit. Is it credible, then, that, even for "large money," the soldiers in question would have given such testimony against themselves as would insure their own immediate execution? If they had really been guilty of sleeping at their post, is it at all likely that they would have admitted their guilt? In order to save themselves, would they not have been almost sure to unite with the disciples in declaring that the body of Jesus disappeared through supernatural means; through means which they had no power to prevent? How much less, then, would they, being really innocent, have pleaded guilty to a capital offense.

Besides all this, would they, unless they were idiots, have testified to events that occurred while they were asleep? They might have testified that the body of Jesus disappeared while they were asleep; but how could they have testified that "His disciples came, . . . and stole him away?" Would such testimony ever have been received, in any court on earth, or by any people? And were the Jewish priests all idiots? If not, would they have given the soldiers "large money" to give in testimony so palpably absurd and so utterly useless? Could they have believed that the people would be satisfied with such totally inadmissible testimony. Did they regard the people as all fools? Do you, indeed, depend for the purity of your Bible upon these priests—these idiotic knaves?

I am not in the habit of saying hard things about my fellow-men. I can control my language, but I cannot always control my feelings. Hence it is that I cannot

avoid a feeling of pity, or of contempt, for those who profess to believe this monstrously absurd and incredible story. If they be sincere, in this profession, then I pity them for their utter want of common sense. If they be not sincere, then I detest them for their want of common honesty.

John has his one woman report her discoveries at the sepulcher to none except Peter and one other disciple, and has them both go with her to the sepulcher. Luke has his five or more women report their discoveries to "the eleven, and to all the rest," and has Peter alone run to the sepulcher. And now which one of these contradictory stories is true?

Mark and John have Jesus, after his resurrection, make his first appearance to Mary Magdalene alone, and has her tell the others. Matthew, who almost invariably deals in twos, has him make his first appearance to two Marys, and has them tell the others. Luke has him make his first appearance to two men, and has them tell the others. Matthew, Mark, and John have him make his first appearance in Jerusalem. Luke has him make it on the road to Emmaus, some distance from Jerusalem. Who tells the truth?

Mark, Luke, and John have Jesus, after his resurrection, hold his first meeting with his disciples in a room at Jerusalem. Matthew, however, has him, by special appointment, hold this first meeting on a mountain in Galilee. Can both accounts be true? If, as you pretend, the respective authors of two of the books in question, were Matthew and John, two of the disciples of Jesus, how could these two authors, having both been present at this first meeting with Jesus, have differed so widely in regard to the place in which it occurred?

Matthew, Mark, and Luke have Jesus hold his first meeting with the whole eleven of his disciples. John, however, has him meet with only ten of them, and has the other one, Thomas, regard these ten, and all the women of

the party, as a set of incorrigible liars, when they declared to him that they had seen Jesus. Again, I ask, can both these accounts be true?

Luke has Jesus make his ascent into heaven from Bethany. Mark has him make it from a room in Jerusalem. The Acts has him make it from Mount Olivet. Matthew has him make it, or, at least, take a final farewell of his disciples, from a mountain in Galilee. John has him do the same, at the Sea of Tiberias. If any one of these five contradictory accounts be true, which one is it, and how are we to know that it is true?

On all hands, it is admitted that the resurrection of Jesus, and his bodily ascent into heaven, are the most important matters connected with either his own history, or that of the Christian Church. Why, then, were not these events established as facts by something like respectable evidence? It is an undeniable fact that, in regard to almost every particular connected with these supposed events, the four Evangelists utterly disagree; and, in many instances, directly contradict one another. The only thing in regard to which they all agree, is in representing the disciples, who thoroughly understood one another's characters, as not having a particle of confidence in one another's veracity, or in that of the women with whom they were associated. When, on the morning of the so-called resurrection, two of these women reported what they had seen, the disciples regarded their reports as "idle tales." When two of the disciples reported that they had seen Jesus, the others did not believe that they spoke a word of truth. So, when all of the women, and ten of the disciples, at last united in declaring that they had seen Jesus, the remaining disciple, Thomas, a sensible man, who very well knew the character of the whole set, refused to believe one word of their united testimony. What wonderful characters they must have possessed! After a very intimate acquaintance, of several years, the disciples regarded those women as far more likely to make

up and tell "idle tales," than they were to report facts. After a similar long and intimate acquaintance with one another, the disciples regarded one another as far more likely to lie than to tell the truth. And now, let me ask, if they had always known one another as strictly truthful persons, could they, after so long and so intimate an acquaintance, have thus regarded one another as persons extremely likely to tell "idle tales," or unmitigated falsehoods? Will we be damned, then, if we believe that, after their thorough acquaintance, their opinions of one another were correct, and that they really were a set of persons whose testimony was totally unworthy of credit?

These are only a few of the many internal evidences that I could adduce to prove that, so far from being the "Inspired Word of God," the New Testament is nothing more than a collection of "idle tales," "absurd fables," and "deliberate forgeries." These few evidences, however, must suffice. I have already detained you too long. I will therefore conclude my present lecture by giving it as my candid opinion that those bigots who attribute to God these "idle tales," these "absurd fables," etc., and who denounce damnation against all who do not follow their blasphemous example, will at last find themselves to be the most thoroughly damned of any set of men that ever were damned.

LECTURE FIFTH.

THE CREATION.

ON account of its vast importance, I shall devote three full lectures to the subject of the Creation, and these three lectures will be almost identical with the first three of my smaller work, entitled "Deity Analyzed." In my present lecture I shall undertake to disprove the story of the Creation, by proving that there never could have been, and consequently never was, any such Being as the Creator.

Whether the universe has always existed, and is self-sustaining, or whether, at some definite period in the past, it was brought from nonentity into existence, by a previously existing personality called God, who still sustains it, is the most important, the most stupendous question to which the thoughts of men have ever been directed. It involves all possible causation, all possible good, and all possible evil.

If, as I hold, the universe be self-existent, and self-sustaining, then to it alone, to the ever-present and unchangable laws of nature, we must look, as the only source of all the evil that has ever afflicted, and of all the good that has ever benefited mankind. On this hypothesis we have no use, no room, for any such personality as God. In other words, we have no God at all; and, having no God to hear and to answer our prayers, we have, of course, no need of prayers. We need not, therefore, be at the trouble and expense of keeping up our worse than useless armies of priests, our gorgeous resorts of fashion called churches, our absurd and entirely mythical institutions of punish-

ment called hell and purgatory, our equally absurd and mythical priest-helpers called devils, etc. In order to attain the highest possible degree of moral, physical, and intellectual perfection and enjoyment, we have only to live constantly in harmony with all of the ever-present laws of our being.

If, on the other hand, as held by my opponents, the universe, at some definite period in the past, was brought from nonentity into existence by a previously existing personality called God, entirely outside of itself and independent of it; and if it is still sustained by that personality or God, then, to him alone, we must look as the source of all possible good, and of all possible evil. On this hypothesis we have no use, no room, for any such thing as science. In other words, we have no such thing as science. In matter, we have no fixed properties; in nature, no unchangeable laws. We have nothing upon which science could be founded. All things depend upon the caprice of this God, who is himself governed by no laws at all.

On this hypothesis, which is generally adopted by all except a few of the most intelligent of men, a certain liquid may at one moment be water, and at the next blood or wine. At one moment, a certain object may be merely a lump of clay; at the next an ape, an ass, or a man. At one moment a certain mass of matter may be nothing but dust; at the next it may be lice, or some other kind of vermin. At one moment a certain object may be simply a wooden rod; at the next, a living serpent; and, at still the next, a wooden rod again, inside of which may be several living serpents, which were once wooden rods, and which it very ungraciously swallowed, while it was their fellow-serpent. At one moment a serpent may be able to strut about on legs, like a first-class dandy; at the next, to his unspeakable disgust and humiliation, he may be compelled to crawl on his belly. At one moment, like a true epicure, he may eat none but the choicest kind of food; at the

next, through a strange perversion of taste, he may eat nothing but dust—dust, of course, which has been changed into lice, or something else of a digestible and nutritious nature. At one moment this serpent may be quietly taking a walk with the most lovely lady in all the land, may be teaching her the uses of certain fine fruits, and, like a first-class theologian, may be instructing her in regard to the nature of God's promises; at the next he may instinctively throw himself into a coil, thrust out his tongue, rattle his tail, and hiss forth his wrath and his venom. On one occasion a woman may have to be born; on another, just as good a woman may be manufactured out of bones—whale-bones, of course. In order to bear a child, a woman may, on one occasion, have to know a man; on another, she may just as easily bear a child without a man. At one time the clouds may pour down water; at another they may pour down fire, bread, brimstone, birds, or great stones. At one time a man may be heavier than air; at another he may be lighter, and may soar aloft in it like a balloon. At one moment a man's strength may lie in his muscles; at another in his hair. At one time a spring of water may flow from the ground; at another just as good a spring may flow from a loose and rolling stone, a large brick, or the jaw-bone of an ass. At one time birds may have to be hatched from eggs; at another, they may be brought forth by the waters; and, at still another, they may be manufactured, like so many bricks, directly from the ground. At one moment a man may be dead and putrid; at the next, alive and well. At one time, well armed, and well disciplined men may fight for their lives, or flee away for safety; at another, they may come quietly up, a thousand at a time, and let a single man, a dissipated vagabond, for mere amusement, beat out their brains with the jaw-bone of an ass. At one time, a man may not be able to lift more than five times his own weight; at another, he may be able, with the utmost ease, to lift an immense hotel with three thousand people in it. At one time, the mere

extending of a wooden rod, in a man's hand, may produce no visible effect at all on any other object; at another, it may divide the waters of a sea, cause a river to flow from a brick, produce millions of tons of lice, frogs, and flies, turn all the rivers and lakes of a large country into blood, produce murrain among all the cattle of a whole nation, cause storms of fire to fall from heaven, entirely shut off the sun's light for three whole days at a time, cause bread to tumble down from heaven, or destroy all the first-borns of a great people. At one time, cattle may be capable of suffering death only once; at another, three times at least—once from murrain, once from hail, and once from drowning. At one time, the sun may rise promptly in the morning; at another, he may not rise at all for three whole days. At one time he may set promptly in the evening; at another, in order to give a band of cut-throats light by which to butcher women and children, he may remain stationary, in mid-heaven, for a whole day at a time. On one occasion, he may move from east to west; on another, in order to please some old fortune-teller, he may move in the opposite direction. At one time, the clouds may pour down scarcely water enough to saturate the ground, and to fill the rivers; at another, they may pour down enough to fill all the space between themselves and the earth, and then pour up enough to raise this immense body, in a solid mass, all around the world, still three or four miles higher. At one time, an ass may merely bray; at another, he may exhort, in good English, like a Methodist preacher at a camp-meeting. At one time, fire, of ordinary hotness, may burn those who are cast into it; at another, though made seven times hotter than an ordinary furnace, it may not scorch their clothes, singe their hair, or even prove uncomfortable to them. At one time, a man may have hair on his head, and nails on his fingers; at another, he may have feathers on his head, and claws on his fingers. At one moment, he may be a mighty king sitting upon a throne; at the next, a gentle

ox eating grass in a pasture with other cattle. At one time, a man may be older than his own son ; at another, he and his son may be exactly of the same age ; and, at still another, the son may be the older of the two. And so on of all other things. There is nothing fixed, nothing upon which we can, with any degree of certainty, depend. Science becomes a burlesque, and the tales of Gulliver and Sindbad the Sailor become perfectly credible histories. We have no need to sow, to reap, to make clothes, to build houses, to marry or to give in marriage. No wonder, then, that Jesus, who seems to have been a firm believer in this supernatural system of things, and who is assumed to have been himself the result of a supernatural connection between an infinitely old bachelor and a beautiful young maid—no wonder, I say, that he commanded us to “take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?” All we have to do is, by means of our prayers, our priests, our churches, our hells, our devils, etc., to sufficiently bamboozle the capricious God who controls all things, and get him to do for us whatever we want done.

On the one side of this great question, we find arrayed a small band of grand thinkers, called scientists, with their matter, their physical forces, etc., which they hold to be, of necessity, eternal, and to be also, in themselves, capable of producing motion, heat, light, life—in short, all the phenomena of nature. On the other side, we find arrayed all the balance of mankind ; vast armies of priests and their countless millions of unthinking followers, with their Brahms, their Buddhas, their Ormutzes, their Ahrimanes, their Chrishnas, their Josses, their Lamas, their Allahs, their Mikadoes, their Jupiters, their Jugger-nauts, their Jehovahs, their Satans, their Beelzebubs, their Jesuses, their suns, their cats, their apes, their snakes, their bulls, their crocodiles, their elephants, their trees, their rivers, and their thousands of other similar gods, demi-gods, devils, etc. By their respective sects of wor-

shippers, these various deific characters are assumed to have brought the universe, from absolute nonentity, into existence, and to be the producers, directly or indirectly, of all the phenomena of nature.

On the one side of this question, we find the scientists, all working harmoniously together for the discovery of truth, and for the advancement of the best interests of the human race. On the other side, we find the religionists all broken up into a thousand intensely hostile sects, fighting one another with the most implacable fury, not for the discovery of truth, or for the advancement of the best interests of the human race, but for the supremacy of their respective deities and their respective religions. Each of these sects swear that all the others are impostors on the broad road to eternal damnation. In the names of their respective deities, they often butcher and burn one another, without any distinction of age, sex, or condition, by the tens of thousands at once. There is scarcely a year of the world's history that is not blackened by the record of some of these horrible religious butcheries. And these butcheries are still being committed, without any abatement of their atrocity, in Turkey, and in other parts of the world, and, from the very nature of their cause, they must and will, inevitably, continue to be committed so long as religions continue to exist upon the earth.

On the side of science, all is law, order, and friendliness. On the side of religion, all is miracle, confusion, and hostility. On the one side, knowledge is everything, and faith, nothing. On the other, faith is everything, and knowledge, nothing. On the one side, the people claim to be men, and, as such, they stand upright in any presence whatever. On the other, they claim to be worms, and, as such, they grovel in the dust before their deities. On the one side, guided by reason, science, and common-sense, the people put their trust in their own exertions, and hence rarely fail in any of their undertakings. On

the other, discarding reason, science, and common sense, they put their trust in their deities, and hence rarely succeed in any of their undertakings. On the one side, we are taught that all diseases and other evils proceed from none but natural causes, and hence can be cured or prevented by none but natural means. On the other, we are taught that all these things proceed from supernatural or god-causes, and can be cured or prevented only by supernatural or god-means.

On the one side, we are taught that the earth is a globe revolving in space; and that there are countless millions of other worlds, scattered, in all directions and at all distances, throughout the infinite expanse. On the other, we are taught that the earth alone, with her appendages, constitutes the entire universe; that it is flat and stationary; that what we call the sky is a firmament or solid structure, placed, like a vast inverted bowl, over the earth; that, to keep them from falling, the sun, the moon, and the stars, all necessarily at an equal distance from the earth, are set, or stuck like nails, into the under side of this firmament; that, on the upper side of this firmament, and, of necessity, above the sun, the moon, and the stars, are vast reservoirs of water, which, at the time of the creation, were provided for the benefit of the earth, and which, at the pleasure of the gods who live up there, can be made to pour down upon the earth, through windows or openings, made for that purpose, in the solid sky or firmament. As I shall fully demonstrate, this is the description, given in the Bible, of the entire universe. This description is said to have been given by inspiration of the God that made the universe; of Jehovah, the God of the Jews, and one of the adopted Gods of the Christians. We are taught, furthermore, that to even doubt the truth of this description, is a sin of so fearful a nature that it insures the eternal damnation of all who commit it.

In all of these, and in a thousand other things, we behold the unmistakable evidences of an inevitable and

an irreconcilable conflict which is now going on, between science and religion, and which, of necessity, must continue to go on, until one or the other of them has ceased to have any advocates among the inhabitants of earth. In vain may religious demagogues cry, "Peace! peace!" when, from the very nature of these two systems, there never can be any peace between them. Either science or religion is bound to be utterly false; and there never can be any permanent peace between the false and the true. If, as science teaches, the forces eternally inherent in matter produce all the phenomena of nature, then it is evident that the gods do not produce any of them. Indeed, as I have already said, there cannot be, upon this hypothesis, any such things as gods. If, on the other hand, as religion teaches, the gods, directly or indirectly, produce all these phenomena, then it is evident that the physical forces do not produce any of them. Indeed, as I have already said, there cannot be, upon this hypothesis, any such things as physical forces; what we are accustomed to call such being really the powers exerted by the gods. The *gods* and the *physical forces*, therefore—*two* entirely distinct *sets* of *causes* for the same *single set* of *effects*—cannot possibly both be *realities*. If, then, gravity, electricity, magnetism, chemical affinity, etc., be real forces, eternally inherent in matter, then, of necessity, the gods—the Brahms, the Josses, the Juggernauts, the Jehovahs, etc.—must be entirely imaginary beings; and vice versa.

As I have already said, and as I have promised to demonstrate, the Bible everywhere represents the earth as flat and stationary; the sky as a firmament or solid structure, into which, to keep them from falling, the heavenly bodies are all set or stuck, etc. The Vedas, the Zend Avesta, the Bagh-Vat-Gheta, the Shaster, the Koran, and all the other great fundamental books of religion, substantially teach these very same doctrines. No one, therefore, can reject these doctrines, without, thereby, also rejecting all the sacred books of the world, which teach

them, and all the gods of the world, from whom these books are supposed to be derived. Hence it is that no religious sect have ever rejected these doctrines. Since *religion*, then, is bound to *retain* these doctrines, and since *science* is bound to *reject* them, there cannot possibly be any *peace* while *religion* and *science* both *exist*.

Until quite recently, the champions of religion were themselves the very ones who most earnestly contended that the teachings of science and those of religion could never, by any possibility, be made to harmonize. When Galileo taught that the earth was a globe revolving in space, the champions of religion, with righteous indignation, promptly charged, and effectually proved, that *his* teachings were in direct conflict with the teachings of the *Bible*, and of the *Christian Church*. Having proved this fact, they would have proceeded to burn him, had he not, on his bended knees, in the most solemn manner, recanted these his infidel teachings, and declared them to be wicked lies prompted by the devil. So when the brave Bruno taught that there were other worlds besides the earth, the champions of religion, with their usual righteous indignation, promptly charged, and effectually *proved*, that *his* teachings were in direct *conflict* with those of the *Bible*, and of the *Christian Church*. Having proved this fact, they proceeded to burn, with the utmost cruelty, this great and good man who, with an almost unparalleled heroism, chose to suffer so horrible a death rather than recant the sublime truths he had taught.

And these cases are only samples of the manner in which the Church, so long as she retained the power to do so, was accustomed to treat those who advocated the now well established truths of science. She has never acknowledged that her teachings on the subjects in question were erroneous, or that her treatment of Galileo, Bruno, and other great scientists was wrong. She still worships, in the same manner, the same bloody God; she still holds, as infallible truth, the same grossly unscientific teachings

of the Bible ; and she still inculcates the same principles of intoleration that led her then, in the zenith of her power, to commit so many acts of monstrous atrocity. Having no longer the power to burn scientists, as infidels, at the stake, she still exultingly dooms them to eternal burnings in a place which she calls hell. If she only had the power, what would she not still do to scientists and all others who reject her absurd dogmas?

It is only since the Church has begun to be worsted in the conflict—only since she has been compelled to act on the defensive—only since she has been made to tremble for her own existence, that her champions have thought of crying, “Peace! peace!” or of trying to show that the teachings of science and those of the Bible can ever be made to harmonize. Those persons, then, who cry, “Peace! peace!” when, from the very nature of the case, there cannot possibly be any peace, are evidently either sadly wanting in common honesty, and are merely giving forth the hypocritical, the selfish, and the cowardly cry of the badly whipped, or else are wofully ignorant of the respective teachings of science and the Bible, as well as of the fearfully blood-blackened history of the Christian Church.

Since, therefore, the teachings of science and those of religion cannot, by any possibility, both be true, and since, from their very nature, they must, inevitably, so long as they both exist, keep up a hurtful conflict, between their respective sets of advocates, it becomes a matter of the utmost importance that we know on which side the truth does lie ; that we know which set of assigned *causes*, the *gods* or the *physical forces*, are the *real producers* of all the phenomena of nature, and which set are *base impositions*, put upon the credulity of mankind, for selfish and ignoble purposes, by cunning and unscrupulous men. Having, by a thorough investigation, correctly determined this question, we can entirely dispense with either science or religion, and thus be spared all the trouble and expense

of the one or the other of these two utterly antagonistic systems.

Are we, then, entirely dependent upon unchangeable laws, eternally existing in nature herself—upon laws with which we may become acquainted, and in harmony with which we may learn to live; or are we entirely at the mercy of a set of angry, jealous, capricious, and blood-thirsty beings, called gods, with whom we can never become acquainted, and, in harmony with whom, we can never learn to live? Are we, indeed, at the mercy of a set of beings who are themselves subject to no laws at all, who, to glut their cruel and unreasonable vengeance, have had untold millions of men, women, and children indiscriminately butchered; who, for the same purpose, have even had their own innocent sons foully murdered; who continue to bring men into existence only to burn them forever, in fire and brimstone; who can never get on without vast armies of priests to tell them what to do, and how to do it; who can be bribed into something like good humor only by the most extravagant presents of roast-beef, roast-mutton, roast human flesh, etc., or by the most unmanly prostrations of ourselves in the dust before them; who require us to engage in the most cowardly whinings for mercy, which we must declare that we do not deserve; who require us to heap upon them the most fulsome protestations of love, which we are not expected to feel; who require us to make the most positive professions of a perfect faith—which we never possess—in the monstrously absurd doctrine that one particular god, an old bachelor, is the father of another god as old as himself, and that these two gods, and a third god, a kinsman of theirs, constitute only one single god? Are we, I repeat, as taught by science, dependent upon the beautiful and harmonious laws of nature, or are we, as taught by religion, dependent upon these monstrous gods and demi-gods? In order to correctly determine this question, we should lay aside

all our prejudices, and fully and fairly examine the testimony on both sides.

It is a self-evident fact that, of necessity, the universe is either created or uncreated. If it be created, then, of necessity, there must have been some pre-existing person or power that created it. If, on the other hand, it be uncreated, then, of equal necessity, there never could have been any such pre-existing creative person or power. The whole question, therefore, rests entirely upon the truth or the falsity of the story of creation. This story is variously told in the world's various systems of theology. That version of it, however, found in the Bible is, of course, the one to which I shall principally adapt the present discussion.

We find the universe to be composed of three essential elements, space, matter, and duration. Of these three elements, space and duration are universally admitted to be, from their very nature, necessarily infinite, eternal, and, of course, uncreated. Having these two eternal and uncreated elements to begin with, therefore, we find it just as easy to conceive that the one remaining element, matter, is also eternal and uncreated, as it is to conceive the same things of the person or the power that, otherwise, must have created it. Indeed, for my own part, I find it much easier to conceive these things of the universe, which I know does exist, and two-thirds of the essential elements of which I know are eternal and uncreated, than to conceive them of some purely assumed being, or set of beings, of whose existence I have not a particle of proof.

If, however, matter was created, then, before its creation, infinite space, being entirely free from all forms of matter, must, of necessity, have been a perfect vacuum. Where, then, at that time, was your assumed Creator, and what was he? Since there never could have been any outside to space, he must, of necessity, have existed entirely inside of space, if he had any existence at all; and since, as taught by all his worshipers, he was omnipresent, he

must, of equal necessity, have been co-extensive with space. Besides this, since matter, as yet, had no existence, he could not have contained anything material in his own composition. It is evident, then, that, since the total absence of all matter constitutes a perfect vacuum, he must, of necessity, have been just such a vacuum. It is equally evident, also, that, since it is utterly impossible for two distinct perfect vacuums to occupy the same space, at the same time, he must, of necessity, have been the very same perfect vacuum to which, as we have already seen, space itself reduces, on the hypothesis that all the matter of the universe was once entirely absent. In other words, empty space indisputably becomes your God, and your God becomes empty space. I defy any escape from this conclusion so fatal to the cause of my opponents.

Be all this as it may, however, for his dwelling-place, God certainly was dependent upon space, a thing which he had not created. For the measure of his existence, he was also, in like manner, dependent upon duration, another thing which he had not created. These two essential elements of the universe not only could, but also, of necessity, actually did exist independent of him. He, however, as you plainly see, could not, and hence, of necessity, did not exist independent of either of them. At the very outset, therefore, we find him to have been, of necessity, a dependent being—dependent upon at least two-thirds of the essential elements of the universe.

Besides all this, it is a fact, universally admitted by all intelligent persons, that nothing as a cause can ever possibly give forth, as an effect, any thing which it does not itself contain. If, then, your God, as a cause, ever gave forth, as an effect, all the matter of the universe, it is evident that this matter, in some form, must, of necessity, have been eternally present in himself. But, as we have already seen, he was himself, of necessity, eternally present in space. Of equal necessity, therefore, all the matter of the universe, being present in himself—being, as it were,

an element in his own composition, must have been present wherever he was himself present. In other words, matter must of necessity have been eternally present in space, just as it is present, therein, to-day. Of necessity, then, matter and space have eternally borne the very same relation to each other that they bear to-day. In other words, the entire material universe has, of necessity, eternally existed just where and just as it exists to-day. Consequently no such creation as you teach ever could have taken place; and no such Creator as you teach ever could have existed.

Although it is utterly impossible to conceive that anything ever came forth from your God which was never in him, yet we now perceive that, if we would retain any apparent use for him, it will never do to have matter eternally present in himself, and he eternally present in space, as he necessarily must have been. Let us, therefore, as do our priests, assume that matter was originally entirely wanting throughout the infinite extent of God himself and of space. Then, as we have already seen, he and space, representing as they do the entire absence of matter, both, of necessity, reduce to one and the same absolutely boundless perfect vacuum.

We have now arrived at that condition which must, of necessity, have existed previous to the creation of matter. We have arrived at what you call the Creator or Great First Cause—at an infinite perfect vacuum, and that alone. From this infinite perfect vacuum, then—from this God, if you prefer the latter term—we must evolve the whole material universe, or else forever abandon the ideas of a special creation, and a personal God. But from such a vacuum, how can we evolve matter? None of the elements of matter are present inside of this vacuum, and there is no outside to it. How, then, can it possibly give forth into being, throughout its own infinite extent, that which itself never contained, and which could never have come from any other source?

In addition to all this, the creation of the universe—if any such creation ever occurred at all—must of necessity have required some kind of action, or motion on the part of the Creator. But motion, as you all know, essentially consists in a change of place. And is our perfect vacuum capable of any such change of place? Certainly not. Since it—since he, if you please; already extends everywhere, it is evidently utterly impossible for him to have the slightest motion, in whole or in part, in any direction. Being, from his very nature, essentially omnipresent, he must, of necessity, like space, with which we have seen that he is identical, remain, through all eternity, perfectly motionless everywhere. It is evident, therefore, that, from this his utter incapability of motion, an infinite or omnipresent God could never have created anything at all; much less the whole boundless universe. In order that he may be able to create anything at all, he must, of necessity, be capable of motion. In order that he may be capable of motion, he must, of necessity, be less in extent than is the space inside of which he is to move. Just as soon, however, as we draw him in, from infinity, on all sides, we necessarily give him limits, and shape, and render him a finite being, utterly incapable of ever producing the infinite universe. Indeed, such a being, flying in a straight line, with a speed billions of times greater than that of light, or of electricity, could never, in all the eons of eternity, reach a point any nearer the end of space than was the point from which he started. No matter, then, how extensive each one of these finite beings might be, and no matter how great might be his rate of motion, it would evidently require an infinite number of them to occupy infinite space, and to create the infinitude of material forms contained therein.

Besides all this, since God and space, as we have already seen, of necessity, reduce to the very same perfect vacuum, how can the one be made less in extent than the other? How can they be separated? In what respect do

they differ? Can this same perfect vacuum, under the one name, differ, in any respect, from itself, under the other name? Can it, under the one name, be separated from itself, under the other name? Can two entirely distinct, and yet exactly similar, perfect vacuums occupy the same space at the same time? If they cannot, then is not either God or space, of necessity, a thing of the imagination alone? And since space certainly does exist, must not God, of necessity, be the imaginary personage or perfect vacuum? If, however, they can both occupy the same space, at the same time, and if the one called God be less in extent than the one called space, in what respect does that portion of the universal perfect vacuum, in which the God-vacuum is present, differ from that portion in which it is not present? Can perfect vacuity be doubled or condensed? What can mark our God-vacuum's boundaries? When he, a perfect vacuum, departs from any portion of the universal perfect vacuum, does not perfect vacuity, of necessity, still remain in that portion just the same as in all others? So when he arrives in any portion of the universal perfect vacuum, can the arrival of his perfect vacuity make any change in the perfect vacuity already existing there? Can his presence differ, in any respect, from his absence? If not, can he have any existence at all?

Besides all this, since every act and every motion is universally admitted to be an *effect*, and since every effect must, of necessity, have a *cause*, what was it that *caused* this *perfect-vacuum God* to begin the work of creation, just when he did, after he had, of necessity, spent an absolute eternity in total inaction? Whatever that cause may have been, it could not have previously been in action. If it had been, it would, of course, have aroused the Creator to action sooner. What was it, then, that caused that cause, after an eternity of inaction, to begin acting at that particular moment? So of all the still more remote causes: what caused each one of them, for the first time in all

eternity, to begin acting just when it did? We are bound to have an infinite chain of causes all acting before the first action of our perfect-vacuum God. Theologians, then, evidently speak falsely, when they declare him to be the "Great First Cause." What were all these causes, and where were they? As to what they were, I will leave theologians to determine. As to where they were, however, I can very easily determine for myself. Since there never was any outside to space, they must, of necessity, have existed inside of space, if they had any existence at all. But, as we have already seen, there was nothing, inside of space, except perfect vacuity. Of necessity, this had always existed unchanged; and, not being itself, as yet, aroused to action, it could not possibly have acted on itself to cause itself to begin acting. Will theologians be so kind as to explain away these difficulties?

Thus, by a series of strictly logical arguments, all based upon premises which no sane man will dispute, I have now fully demonstrated the fact that no being, who is either finite or infinite in the extent of his presence, could ever have created the universe. But, of necessity, all beings are bound to be, in this respect, either finite or infinite. I have, therefore, demonstrated that no being of any kind ever created the universe. In other words, I have demonstrated that it was never created at all; that, of necessity, it is absolutely eternal in its existence, and self-sustaining in its powers. I will now proceed, in the same manner, to demonstrate the same facts in regard to a being who is either finite or infinite in the duration of his existence.

All intelligent persons will, of course, admit that, if the universe was ever created at all, the period of duration, which has elapsed since its creation, must, of necessity, be a finite period, containing six thousand years, more or less. They will also admit that the whole duration of God's existence, up to the present moment, is necessarily composed of the period that elapsed *before the creation*,

plus the period that has elapsed *since* that *event*. No one will think of claiming that there is any *eternity* in the six thousand years, more or less, that have elapsed *since* the *creation*. If, then, God's existence be *eternal*, as all his worshipers declare that it is, and as it must be to render him of any advantage to them, the *eternal* portion of it must, of necessity, be that period which elapsed *before* the *creation*. But, as you are all bound to admit, an *infinite* or *eternal* period is, of necessity, utterly incapable of ever having an *end*, or of ever growing any *less*. Were we to multiply a line of small figures, a million miles in length, by itself a million times, then raise the result to the millionth power, and then let every unit in the result represent a million of ages, the period thus indicated, taken from eternity—from the period which you correctly claim that God must, of necessity, have existed before he began the work of creation—would not, in the least, diminish the extent of that period. Indeed, no period, however inconceivably immense it may be, can be *infinite* or *eternal*, if it ever *does*, or even *can*, become any *less*.

That period of God's existence, however, which preceded the point at which he began the work of creation, *did* grow *less*, and *did* have an *end*. It could not have been otherwise, and yet God reach that creative point at all. No matter in what part of the infinitude of that which we call the past, you fix the creative point in question, it is evident that, of necessity, before he could possibly reach that point, God had first to *entirely live out*—*completely end* all that portion of his existence which *preceded* that *point*. This is a self-evident fact which no intelligent person will attempt to dispute. However inconceivably immense that period may once have been, it had, of necessity, to grow less and less continually, until it had all elapsed, and the creative point had been reached. Had it not thus continually grown less and less until it finally came to an end, the creative point, as you are all bound to see, could never, by any possibility, have been reached at

all. Thus you see that God could not have lived, and, consequently, did not live, during an infinite or eternal period, previous to the point at which you place the creation. The pre-creative period of his existence could not possibly have had an end, as we see that it certainly did have, without first having had a beginning. It could not possibly have been finite, when taken in the one direction, and infinite, when taken in the other. I have now fully demonstrated, therefore, that God himself, of necessity, had a beginning, if the universe had. In order, then, to make him eternal, we must, of necessity, place the eternal portion of his existence in the period which has elapsed since the universe has been in existence. In order to make this period eternal, however, we must, of necessity, make the existence of the universe itself eternal. This, of necessity, renders the universe uncreated, and leaves us no use at all, and no room, for a Creator.

From all this, you are bound to admit that, if there ever was any Creator at all, he was, of necessity, a finite being; that, like ourselves, he had a beginning of existence; and that, like ourselves, he is capable of having an end of existence. Which will you do, then, entirely renounce the absurd ideas of a special creation and a personal Creator, or accept, for the Creator, a finite being, like ourselves? If you choose the former horn of this dilemma, you become, like myself, an Infidel—such a person as your Church, so long as she had the power to do so, always burnt, and such a person as she still delights to doom to eternal burnings, in a place which she has invented for the express purpose of such burnings, and which she calls hell. If you choose the latter horn, you must, of necessity, have an older God to bring your Creator into existence; a still older God to bring that God into existence, and so on for an infinite number of Gods. You are in precisely the condition of the man who attempted to account for the supposed stability of the earth by assuming that the earth stood on a turtle's back; that this

turtle stood on another turtle's back, and so on down through an infinite series of turtles. In this case, something had to reach all the way down, through infinite space; and, since one turtle could not possibly do this, an infinite number of turtles had to do it. In your case, something has to reach all the way back, through infinite duration; and, since one God cannot possibly do this, an infinite number of Gods must do it. There is no possible alternative.

Besides all this, what proof have you that your present God will continue to live forever in the future? Since he certainly did entirely live out all that portion of his existence which preceded the creation, why may he not, in like manner, entirely live out all that portion which follows the creation? May not an infinite series of Gods, then, be just as necessary in the future, as I have shown them to have been in the past?

In addition to all these things, it is a self-evident fact that, in whatever way it is possible for a single individual of any kind to derive his existence, it is equally possible for other individuals of the same kind to derive their existence. It is evident, therefore, that, in whatever way your God derived his existence, other Gods of the same kind may have derived theirs. What proof have you, then, that your God is the only God there is? If your God be self-existent, why may not other Gods be self-existent also? If your God resulted from pre-existing causes, why may not other Gods have resulted from the same causes? So, on the other hand, if all the other gods are the results of mere assumptions on the part of the ignorant and superstitious people who first worshiped them, why may not your God be the result of a similar assumption on the part of the equally ignorant and superstitious people who first worshiped him? I propose to prove that all gods, yours not excepted, are equally the results of mere assumptions.

The Bible makes no attempt to *prove* the existence of a God. It simply *assumes* his existence as something in

which the people of pre-Bible times already belived. Your belief in the existence of a God, therefore, does not rest on the testimony of the *Bible*, but on the mere *opinions* and *assumptions* of the ignorant and superstitious *pagans* who lived before there *was* any *Bible*. And of how much value, as evidence, in such a case, are the mere opinions and assumptions of such men? Were men thus totally ignorant of all the physical forces of nature, and filled with the most absurd superstitions, any better qualified to arrive at the truth in regard to this matter than are the great scientists and philosophers of the present time? If not, can you be absolutely certain that they actually did find a real God? If, without any effort on their own part, those grossly ignorant men really did find such a being, why is it that, after the most careful tests, and the most thorough researches, none of the great scientists and philosophers, of the present age, have ever been able to find even the faintest trace of him? Besides this, admitting that those ignorant primitive men really did find a genuine God, are you sure that he was the same God that you now worship?

You claim that your God often revealed himself, in various ways, to his first worshipers. This, however, is pure assumption. You have not a particle of proof that such was the fact. You may just as well, therefore, let your God rest directly upon a pure assumption, as to have him rest upon purely assumed proofs. Besides this, these very same assumptions are made by every other religious sect, to prove the existence of their gods. And is not pure assumption worth as much in their case as it is in yours?

Admitting, however, that your God did reveal himself to his first worshipers, may not each of the other gods have revealed himself, in like manner, to his first worshipers? What proof have you that there is only one God, and that your God is that one? What single argument can you adduce in favor of your own God, that cannot, with equal force and propriety, be adduced by every other

sect in favor of theirs? Do you wish to arrive at the truth in regard to the various gods, or do you wish, at all hazards, and without regard to truth, to sustain your own particular God? If Jehovah and Jesus were really false Gods, and the Bible a false book, would you wish to know these facts, or would you rather ignorantly cling to these Gods and this book, even though they were really false? If all gods be, as I hold that they are, merely priestly impositions upon the credulity of mankind, are you willing to know this fact and to reject these impositions? If you are not—if you prefer to be blind to the truth, and tied to impositions, then I have nothing more to say to you. I do not wish to cast my pearls before such swine. If, however, you love truth more than you love your priest-made and priest-paying creeds, then let us reason together; let us investigate these things.

If we take a thousand of the world's principal gods, you will promptly condemn nine hundred and ninety-nine of them as wicked priestly inventions. I will do the same. In regard to all of these gods, we have both been accustomed to exercise our reason. Only in regard to the one remaining God will we differ—only in regard to the particular God with whom you were thoroughly stuffed, before you were old enough to reason, and concerning whom you have never since dared to exercise your reason. I, having exercised my reason in regard to this God, just as I have in regard to all the others, reject him, just as I reject them. You would do the same, had you, like myself, dared to exercise your reason concerning him, as you have exercised it concerning them. It is an indisputable fact that all mankind uniformly reject all the gods concerning whom they are accustomed to exercise their reason. Had you been born a Brahmin, you would then have dared to exercise your reason concerning your present Gods, Jehovah, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost, and would certainly have rejected them, just as all do who do reason concerning them, and just as you yourself reject all the gods concern-

ing whom you do reason. In that case, however, you would not have dared to reason concerning Brahm, and, consequently, would have accepted him, just as you now accept the only Gods concerning whom you have never dared to reason. And thus it is with all other men and all other gods. Where reason is, gods are not.

It is a well-known and universally admitted fact, that all the gods of the world, without a single exception, have had their origin in primitive conditions of society, and among men groveling in ignorance and superstition. No god ever was, and, from the very nature of the case, no god ever could be successfully started among educated and intelligent people; and, for obvious reasons, no god ever was, or ever could be, in his character, superior to the conceptions of the men who originated him. Indeed, every one of the gods, of whom we have any knowledge, has been simply a reflection of the race, the color, the nationality, the opinions, etc., of the men who invented him. As a cause, these men could not possibly give to him, as an effect, any characteristics which they themselves did not possess. They could not do otherwise than make him in their own "image and likeness." Hence it is that the gods of the Hindoos are all Hindoos; the gods of the Chinese, all Chinamen; the gods of the Africans, all Africans, etc. Hence it is, too, that in every lineament of his character, the God of the Hebrews was a Hebrew. Hence it is that he never claimed to be anything else than a Hebrew, and never claimed to be the God of any other people. Hence it is that he so faithfully reflected the selfishness, the jealousy, treachery, the bloodthirstiness, the love of polygamy, and all the other traits of character that were prominent among the Hebrews at the time they framed his character. Hence it is that he so faithfully reflected their fondness for roast-beef and roast-mutton, and their abhorrence of swine's flesh. Hence it is, also, that he so faithfully reflected their ideas of a flat and stationary earth, a solid sky or firmament, a day independent of the sun, etc.

And all this is equally true of the world's dozen or more demi-gods or Saviors. According to the teachings of their respective sets of followers, each of these demi-gods was the son of the principal god of the particular country in which he chanced to appear; each one was born of a virgin of that same country; and each one was put to death for the salvation of the world. For obvious reasons, all these demi-gods have been of the same race, color, nationality, opinions, and other characteristics, as the people among whom they have respectively appeared. In all respects, Chrishna was a pure Hindoo; and this fact proves that both his parents were Hindoos. In all respects, Mithra was a pure Persian; and this fact proves that both his parents were Persians. In all respects, Jesus was a pure Hebrew; and this fact proves that both his parents were Hebrews. So of all the rest of these so-called Saviors. Indeed, no people can well conceive of either a god or a demi-god as differing from themselves in race, color, opinions, etc.

If, as you teach, your God be the common Father of all men, then, of necessity, he is just as nearly related to the negro race as he is to our own. If, moreover, as you also teach, he be no respecter of persons, then, of necessity, he must love the negro race just as much as he loves our own. Indeed, that would be a very degrading idea of him which would make him, like men, subject to the prejudices, the antipathies, and the affinities of race or color. Suppose, then, that, instead of selecting a woman of our *own race and color*, to be the mother of his son, or, rather, of himself, he had seen fit to select an *African* virgin, and to have himself incarnated as a *woolly-headed, thick-lipped, flat-nosed, protruding-jawed, spindle-shanked, long-heeled, flat-footed "buck negro,"* with the *offensive odor* peculiar to *that race*, could you have conceived of him as your *God*? You very well know that you could not. No white man can conceive of a "darkie" as his God. This would be equally true, even were the "darkie's" claim to

God-ship twice as well established as is that of Jesus. A white man can no more reflect a colored *God* than he can reflect a colored *image* in a looking-glass. So of all other races, and of all other colors. None of them can reflect *gods* differing from *themselves*. It is evident, therefore, that people of one race and of one color can never hope to successfully palm off their own gods—mere reflections of themselves—upon the people of another race and of another color, who are totally unable to reflect any such gods. All history goes to prove the truth of this assertion. So long as gods remain in use at all, every people will have gods like unto themselves. Show me the gods of a people, then, and I will describe those people. Show me the people and I will describe their gods.

As I have already remarked, all the gods of the world have been assumed or invented by the ignorant and superstitious men of primitive times. These assumptions or inventions seem to have been originally made simply to account for the various phenomena of nature, the real causes of which, those ignorant primitive men could neither perceive nor understand. Had the real causes of these phenomena been always known, men would never have needed any such things as gods; and, consequently, would never have thought of inventing them, or of assuming that they existed. Until comparatively recent times, however, the forces, now known to inhere in matter as essential properties or conditions thereof, were entirely unknown. Primitive men had no idea of any agency or cause of motion, except the will of sentient beings, such as men and other animals. To them, therefore, all the phenomena of nature, very naturally, seemed to be produced by the direct agency of living and conscious, but invisible beings, with thoughts, appetites, and passions like those of men or of beasts. Some were supposed to resemble men in their forms and their characters. Others, in these respects, were supposed to resemble various kinds of beasts. These imaginary beings were called gods, and

were accredited with power—sufficient to produce all the phenomena of nature. Thus thunder became the voice of a god, or else the sound of his violent stampings upon the floor of heaven. In like manner, wind became the breath of a god; while hurricanes, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, etc., became fearful exhibitions of the uncontrollable fury, or of the implacable malignity of a god. All the gods, therefore, were originally represented as being subject to frequent, and, sometimes, entirely unaccountable fits of the most fearful fury; as harboring long pent-up feelings of the most horrible revenge; and as pouring out destruction alike upon the innocent and upon the guilty, without any distinction of age, sex, or condition. Of course such beings were regarded as far more the objects of fear than of love.

It was perfectly natural, therefore, for men to seek, just as they did, to win the favor, or, at least, to turn away the anger of these terrible gods. Believing, as they did, that these gods had appetites and passions similar to their own, it was perfectly natural, too, for men to seek, just as they did, to propitiate the gods by the very same means they were wont to use in propitiating one another—that is, by means of offerings, supplications, adulations, etc. Since flesh constituted the principal article of food—the only wealth, in fact, of the people, it was, consequently, the most common and the most acceptable offering made by men to one another. They, therefore, very naturally supposed that it would also be equally acceptable to the gods. Hence it is that, in the earlier part of their respective careers, while their respective sets of followers still lived savage or pastoral lives, and subsisted upon flesh, all the gods were wont to be propitiated by means of meat offerings. Over half the gods of the world are still propitiated in this manner. This is the manner in which your adopted God used to be propitiated, when he was the tutelary divinity of the Hebrew nation alone. His anger, which was constantly being aroused by one trifling matter or another,

could nearly always be bought off with a certain amount of roast beef, or roast mutton. Of these substantial articles of diet, he was supposed to be exceeding fond; and upon their savory odors he was supposed to regale himself, as they were sent up to him on columns of smoke and heated air. This is the plain teaching of the Bible.

When, however, in certain countries, men abandoned the savage and the pastoral modes of living, when they turned their attention to the cultivation of the soil; when the mere obtaining of food ceased to be the principal object of existence; when regular governments were established; when kings and other great men, having an abundance of food drawn from agricultural sources, ceased to value or to demand presents of meats and other articles of diet; when, in place of such presents, they began to demand, from their subjects or followers, certain marks of honor, and certain oaths or protestations of love, loyalty, admiration, etc.; the gods of those countries were supposed to have undergone a similar change in their tastes and in their demands. In these countries, therefore, the simple method of buying off the anger of the gods with meat offerings, gradually gave place to the method, now in use, of accomplishing the same object by offering to them immense amounts of cheap and fulsome flattery, protestations of love, etc. In order, however, to turn the people away from the the sacrificial method, to which they had always been accustomed, and get them to adopt other methods which, under the changed conditions of society, would be more profitable to priests, princes, and other great men, certain fables had to be invented, to the effect that certain good men, or demi-gods, Krishna, Mithra, Prometheus, Jesus, and others, had been offered, once for all, as meat-offerings or sacrifices, each to some fearfully offended god, and had thus rendered such sacrifices no longer necessary. The abolition of the expensive sacrificial method of appeasing the wrath of the gods was so good a thing that it would almost have justified the

false means by which it was accomplished, had not equally absurd, expensive, and pernicious methods been adopted in its stead.

If the gods know anything at all, they certainly know, better than any human being can inform them, just how good, how wise, how large, and how great they are; and, also, just what are their duties, their opinions, and their intentions. Notwithstanding all this, however, they are supposed, by their respective sets of followers, to have the bump of approbateness so prodigiously developed, and to be so totally devoid of modesty, that, although, for thousands of years, they have been daily and hourly told of their various excellences, they still take immense delight in having these same things repeated to their faces in the most public and ostentatious manner. So extremely fond, indeed, are they supposed to be of this one kind of amusement that they devote almost their whole time to it. We are assured that they will pardon the most hardened of sinners, if he will only sprawl in the dirt before them; have himself sprinkled with water, or soused into a goose-pond by one of their priests; stuff them with a goodly amount of this fulsome flattery; and profess to believe the monstrously absurd doctrine that a certain god is the father of another god as old as himself, and that these two gods and a third god, all three constitute only one god. I wish you, who style yourselves orthodox Christians, to watch yourselves, whenever you go to worship, and see whether the whole process does not consist in stuffing your God with a goodly quantity of pure "blarney," and in giving him a multitude of instructions in regard to what you seem to consider his various duties. When viewed in the light of reason, science, and common sense, how supremely ridiculous do these mummeries become! And yet they constitute all there is, and all there can be, of that relic of barbarism and superstition called religious worship. But let us return to our subject.

As x , y , z , etc., are assumed to represent the unknown

quantities in an algebraic equation, so, as I have already said, the various gods were originally assumed to represent the unknown causes of the various phenomena of nature. As x , y , z , etc., become totally useless the moment the unknown quantities, which they have been made to represent, become known, so, in like manner, the various gods become totally useless the moment the unknown causes, which they have been made to represent, become known. The gods, standing thus in the place of the unknown in nature, are evidently mere personifications of men's ignorance. It is equally evident, too, that they are necessary just in proportion to the amount of that ignorance. You all very well know that we never find any need of the gods, or any proof of their existence, in those things which we fully understand. Although you may not have sufficient moral courage to admit the fact, yet all of you, who possess ordinary intelligence, know very well that, in ignorance alone, we find all the need we have of the gods, and all the proof we have of their existence.

To him who, like the originators of the various gods, is totally ignorant of all the forces inherent in matter, every phenomenon of nature requires the direct agency of a god for its production. To such a person, therefore, every phenomenon of nature constitutes a positive proof of the existence of such beings. To him who is ignorant of comparatively few of the physical forces, there are comparatively few of the phenomena of nature that require the agency of a god in their production. To such a person, therefore, there are comparatively few proofs of the existence of such beings. Finally, to him who comprehends the whole economy of nature, there is nothing at all that requires the agency of a god for its production. To such a person, therefore, there is no proof at all of the existence of any such beings. From all this, you can easily understand the well-known fact that, in all countries and all ages, the most ignorant people have always been the most firm believers in their respective gods, and that

what you stigmatize as Infidelity has never prevailed except among the educated and intelligent.

Since the gods cannot possibly reflect anything higher or nobler than the conceptions of the ignorant and superstitious primitive men who invented or framed their characters, they are necessarily far inferior to the vastly finer conceptions of the greatest minds of the present day. In order, therefore, to still cling to these antiquated embodiments of ignorance and superstition, men must have their minds thoroughly religioned—tied back, as the word signifies—from the light of the brighter present to the impenetrable gloom of the dark past. To men whose minds are thus religioned—thus tied back to gods that never advance—there can never be any such word as progress, never any such motto as “Onward and Upward.”

Although, at first, the gods were assumed merely to represent the unknown causes of natural phenomena, yet they soon became sources of wealth and of power to those who pretended to act as their agents or ministers. Around every god, of any note, therefore, there very naturally arose an order of selfish, cunning, and unscrupulous men, called priests, who made the god a means of drawing a luxurious living from the unrequited labors of others. These priests elaborated a system of religion—of tying men’s minds back—consisting mostly in meaningless but imposing ceremonies, calculated to impress the unreasoning rabble with a feeling of awe. In a thousand ways, these multitudinous ceremonies rendered the priests absolutely necessary to the people. In this way, the priests secured to themselves great honors, powers, immunities, and emoluments. Hence it is that no god has ever been able to get on without vast swarms of greedy priests, interpreters, advisers, etc., all supported in worse than idleness, upon the immense revenues drawn from the over-worked, over-taxed, and shamefully deluded people. From all this, you can easily understand why it is that, whenever any god has ceased to be a paying institution, his priests

have always promptly abandoned *his* service, and entered into the service of a *better paying god*. A *poor god*, like a *poor man*, rarely has *many friends*, and especially among the priesthood, who always have an eye to the profits. Suppose, for instance, that Jehovah and Jesus should become extremely popular in India, and that the priests of Brahm could receive ten times as much honor and money, by entering into their service, as they could by remaining in the service of Brahm, how many of them, do you think, would remain in the service of this latter god? So if Brahm should become extremely popular in this country, and if our priests could receive ten times as much honor and money, by entering into his service, as they could by remaining in the service of Jehovah and Jesus, how many of them, do you think, would remain in the service of these latter Gods?

As might have been expected, these various systems of religion have been constantly coming into collision with one another. Nearly all history, indeed, is a mere recital of the inhuman butcheries and other horrible deeds perpetrated upon one another, in the name of their respective gods, by the various sects of the world's religionists. Indeed, there never was a god, of any note, that was not carried to eminence, by his worshipers, through rivers of human blood. This remark is especially true of one of the Gods that you profess to worship. This is the one you adopted from the Hebrews. Whether we regard the earlier part of his career, when he was merely the tutelary divinity of the Hebrew nation alone, or the later part, after he was adopted as one of the Deities of the Christian Church, we find that his record surpasses that of any other god in its fearful blackness of blood, of crime, and of woe.

As I have already said, there is no proof at all of the existence of any such beings as gods, except the various phenomena of nature which they are supposed to produce. When, therefore, science establishes the fact that all these phenomena are produced by an entirely different set of

causes, the forces essentially inherent in matter, the gods, of necessity, are driven out of existence, or at least compelled to hide themselves in the brains of those whose mental darkness has not yet been penetrated by the sunlight of science. Thus it has been with thunder, which, until comparatively recent times, was almost universally supposed to be, as represented in the Bible, produced by the direct agency of a god, either bellowing with his mighty lungs, or stamping upon the floor of heaven with his immense feet. Indeed, notwithstanding the united opposition of all the religious sects of the world, science has now succeeded in driving the gods from nearly all the phenomena of nature. When the light of science enters, the gods depart.

Since every religionist is necessarily tied back to the unscientific belief that his gods are the producers of worlds, of motion, of heat, of light, of life—of all the phenomena of nature—he will never dare seek, and, consequently, will never be able to know, the true causes of any of these phenomena. So long as a man fully believes that a god is the cause or producer of a certain phenomenon, such as human life, for instance, he will never think of seeking out, among the forces inherent in matter, any other cause or producer of that phenomenon. Scientific researches of this kind are made by none except those who have come to doubt the assumed god-causes. In the eyes of religionists, however, to doubt a god-cause, for the phenomena in question, is to become an Infidel fit only for eternal burnings in hell. Hence it is that, while remaining such, no genuine religionist ever added anything to the treasures of science. Hence it is that nearly all the sublime truths ever brought to light from the great arcana of nature, have been brought to light by those bravest and noblest of men whom you still stigmatize and persecute, and whom, so long as you had the power to do so, you were wont, with indescribable cruelty, to burn as hell-deserving infidels.

If, as you teach, your God be a *person*, then, of necessity, he must possess all the essential *characteristics* of *personality*. He must have *shape* of some kind, and this we can give him only by assigning to him certain *limits* or *boundaries*, and thus rendering him, of necessity, a *finite being*. If he *moves*, as he must to perform any works at all, he must, of necessity, be capable of *changing place*; and his *absence* must, in some way, *differ* from his *presence*. This, again, renders him, of necessity, a *finite being*; since, if he were *infinite*, he would necessarily be *everywhere*, *all the time*, and hence could not possibly *move from one place to another*. If he *thinks*, as he must to be an intelligent being, there must, of necessity, be some *point* within him from which his thoughts proceed, and this *point* must, in some way, *differ* from all his *other parts*. Such *difference of parts*, however, involves the necessity of *organization*. So, if he has *sex*, as he must have to be a *father*, he must, of necessity, have *organization*, without which *sex* cannot *exist*. So of the faculties of *seeing*, *hearing*, *loving*, *speaking*, and all the *other characteristics* of *personality*. They all involve the necessity of *organization*, which cannot possibly be possessed by anything that is *infinite*.

Having thus limited him in his extent or presence, by assigning to him these essential characteristics of personality, there must, of necessity, extend beyond him, in all directions, an infinity of space, over which a finite being, like himself, could never, in all the ages of eternity, pass even in one single direction. Thus you see that your personal God is totally inadequate to the work of creating, or of occupying and sustaining, the infinite universe. Your Bible, therefore, very wisely has him devote his entire time and attention to this world alone. Indeed, it has him devote most of his time and attention to a very small portion of this world. It has him, for many centuries, take up his abode in a house, among a small nation of semi-barbarians, and enjoy the roast-beef and other good things with which they supplied him. It has him beget his only

Son in this world, and for the benefit of this world alone. Indeed, it represents him as being totally ignorant of the existence of any other worlds, and even of the size and the shape of the earth. It represents him as believing that the earth is flat and stationary, that the sky is a solid structure or "firmament," that the stars are little brilliant ornaments about the size of figs, set in this "firmament;" that day is independent of the light of the sun, etc. Finally, it has no one in his heaven but the inhabitants of this one little world alone. Would it not be well, then, for you to follow the example of your Bible, and have him leave to an infinite number of other gods, or, better still, to the laws of nature, the care of the countless millions of mighty worlds and systems of worlds that roll, in their unspeakable glory, throughout the boundless regions of uncreated space?

If, on the other hand, your God is not a person, and is not limited, as a person must be, what is he? What can he be but empty space, as I have already shown that he must be, or, at least, a shapeless, invisible, imponderable, impalpable, inaudible, illimitable, incomprehensible negation, in every respect exactly similar to empty space, exactly equivalent to it, and exactly identical with it. He cannot be where space is not, nor can space be where he is not. Of necessity they are co-extensive and inseparable. If, then, they be not one and the same thing, in what respect do they differ? They have one, and only one, property, capacity, or characteristic. This is exactly the same in both, and consists simply in infinite extension in all directions. They are both equally incapable of having either a beginning or an end, a top or a bottom, a center or a circumference. They are both equally incapable of being increased or diminished, multiplied or divided. They are both equally incapable of moving or of producing motion, of seeing or of being seen, of hearing or of being heard, of feeling or of being felt, of loving or of being loved, of possessing knowledge or of imparting it.

Indeed, it is a well established truth that no infinite quantity of any kind can possibly be either the subject or the object of any operation whatever. What, then, can your infinite, your shapeless, your motionless God be, and what can he do, destitute, as he necessarily is, of all substance, of all thought, of all sensation, and of all consciousness?

If, as you teach, this infinite negation—this God of yours—thinks, his thoughts must, of necessity, both in space and in duration, have some point from which they emanate. It is obviously utterly impossible for a thought to simultaneously start into existence at every point, throughout the entirety of either infinite space or infinite duration. Your God's thoughts, then, having thus a beginning both of their existence and of their flight, are necessarily finite in their character, and hence utterly incapable of ever extending throughout the infinity of either space or duration; and, consequently, they are equally incapable of ever extending throughout the infinity of the thinker himself. The parts of your God, therefore, which are infinitely distant from the point from which his thoughts emanate, can never possibly know what those thoughts may be. Besides this, as we all know, thought requires an object as well as a subject. What, then, were the objects upon which your God exercised his thoughts during the eternity which, of necessity, must have preceded his first act of creation? During all that utterly endless period—which, however, according to your teachings, did, nevertheless, actually come to an end—there was nothing in existence except God himself. And do you pretend that he spent that utterly endless, and yet actually ended, period, thinking of nothing but himself? If so, what finally turned his thoughts from this eternal contemplation of himself?

You may claim that he was not long thus utterly alone and totally unemployed; that he began the work of creation very soon. Very soon after what? After the begin-

ning of his own existence, of course. On no other hypothesis, can we have him exist for any other than an eternal period, alone and unemployed, previous to his first act of creation. Of necessity, he must have been alone and unemployed during all that period of his existence which preceded his first act of creation; and, of equal necessity, that period must have been of either finite or infinite duration. If it was a finite period—if he actually did, as you claim, exist only a short time alone and unemployed—then it is evident that, by going backward in duration, a little beyond the point at which the first act of creation was performed, we must, of necessity, reach a point beyond which he did not exist. This hypothesis necessarily renders him a finite being, and, as I have already explained, involves the necessity of an infinite series of older Gods. This will never do. We have no possible alternative, therefore, but to make the period in question one of infinite duration. This alternative, however, avails us nothing. It compels us to place God at an infinite distance in duration beyond the point at which the first act of creation is assumed to have been performed. But, as I have already shown, an infinite period or distance in duration, like this, is absolutely incapable of ever having an end, or of ever becoming any less. It is evident, then, that, when we have once placed God at an infinite distance in duration beyond the point at which the creation is assumed to have been begun, we necessarily render it utterly impossible for him to ever be at less than an infinite distance beyond that point. Consequently, he never could have reached, and, of course, never did reach, the point at all, at which the creation is assumed to have been begun. Your assumed creation, therefore, never could have been, and, consequently, never was performed at all. The universe is proven to be, of necessity, eternal in its existence; your assumed Creator is proven to be, of necessity, a fabulous monster; and yourselves are proven

to be the blinded victims of an outrageous priestly imposition.

All these results are just as inevitably reached, no matter how far back, in the eternal past, we may fix the point at which we assume that the work of creation was begun. In any case, there must, of necessity, be an undiminished and utterly undiminishable period lying still beyond that point—lying still between that point and your assumed Creator. Over this period, he can never pass. Indeed, it is just as utterly impossible for anything to come in, from beyond all space and all duration, to a point inside of both, as it is for that thing to go out, from such a point, and to pass entirely beyond them both. If either space or duration is infinite, when taken in the one direction, it must, of necessity, be equally infinite, when taken in the other. And now, which horn of this dilemma—the finite or the infinite—will you choose? You are compelled to choose either the one or the other. Choose whichever you may, however, your cause is hopelessly lost.

Besides all this, where is the point located, from which your God's thoughts emanate? In what respects does this point differ from other points in himself and in space? And what acts upon this point, more than upon others, to cause it to give forth thoughts? Where are your God's senses or faculties of seeing, hearing, loving, hating, etc., located, and in what respects do these locations differ from other portions of himself and of space? In what does his sex consist, and where is it located? How and where did the seed or life-germ from which his Son sprang originate, and by what means was it conveyed to the proper spot in the body of the mother? According to your own creeds, your God has neither body nor parts. What portion of him, then—what portion of infinite space—with which, as I have already shown, he is everywhere exactly identical, and utterly inseparable—can be so brought to bear upon a woman as to put her in a condition to become a mother? Besides this, since, of necessity, infinite space

and, your infinite God coincide throughout their entire extent—since, of necessity, the very same portion of each must be brought to bear upon the woman, at the very same moment, and in the very same manner, how are we to know which is the father of the child, empty space, or your equally empty God? Finally, if either of them alone, or both of them together, can beget one child, why may they not, in the same way, beget many children? Did the begetting of one child entirely exhaust their procreative powers? If not, can any of our women be entirely safe, with both space and your God all around them?

You teach that Jesus was literally begotten by just such a God as I have described; and yet you also teach that Jesus himself was this very same God. If this doctrine is not the climax of absurdity, I would like to know what that climax is. It would seem to be bad enough to have such an infinite, shapeless, motionless, substanceless, and incomprehensible negation beget a child at all. To have it beget itself, however, in the form of a child, is a thousand times worse. Your doctrine on this subject is far worse than that of the ancient pagans, who had their gods beget children in abundance, but did not have them beget themselves. Besides this, the manner in which, according to your own teachings, your God begot his Son, or, rather, himself, seems to me to be far inferior to the manner in which those pagan gods are said to have begotten their offspring. From the best authorities we have on the subject, we learn that, when a god wished to beget himself a son—few gods, if any, would ever condescend to beget daughters upon human mothers—he sometimes materialized himself, *a la mode* Katie King, and, in the substantial form of a man, held genuine sexual intercourse with the woman—always a virgin—whom he had selected to be the mother of his son. At other times, he would enter into a living man—always a priest—and, through that man's organs of sex, accomplish his divine purpose, just as spirits, of the present day, when wishing to give

communications to the living, are said to accomplish their purpose, through the hands or the tongues of very susceptible persons, called mediums. Of these two methods of procreation, the latter, being by far the more practical, seems to have been the one which the gods generally adopted. For obvious reasons, this method was also by far the more popular one of the two, among the well-fed priests whose bodies, as I have already said, were invariably used on these occasions. For my own part, I suspect that this more practical, natural, and sensible manner was the very manner in which your God begot his son, if he ever begot any such Son at all. Indeed, I cannot conceive of any better plan.

Letting all these things pass, however, I wish to ask if any of you are so totally blinded by priestcraft as to imagine that your educated and intelligent priests themselves believe a word of the monstrously absurd doctrines which, for pay and popularity, they preach to you concerning the utterly empty God whom they pretend to serve? Do you imagine that they believe that this utterly empty God ever literally begot a son, and that the Son, so begotten, was himself this very some empty God that begot him? As shepherds, these priests do, indeed, feed the sheep. They feed them, too, on just such stuff as they perceive that the sheep like—on just such stuff as they perceive causes the sheep to make the finest yield of wool and the best quality of mutton. But does any intelligent shepherd, such as these are, ever himself swallow down the same kind of stuff that he feeds to his sheep? And does such a shepherd usually feed his sheep long without also fleecing them? For what but the profits does he labor? The poor, stupid sheep may imagine that he unselfishly labors for their good alone. He himself, however, knows better. You play sheep. Your priests, the more intelligent of whom are generally thorough Infidels, play shepherd. And who gets the wool?

You teach that your God is all pure spirit. Probably

he is. But what is pure spirit? The word spirit comes from the Latin *spirare*, to breathe, to blow, etc., and formerly meant neither more nor less than the atmosphere or air which we breathe, and which, by many, was supposed to be a god. This was very justly regarded as an exceedingly great god. Upon him depended the existence of all living things. So far as was then known—so far as is now known, in fact—he was omnipresent, if not omnipotent. In him, men were truly said to live, to move, and to have their being. Men were truly said to dwell in him, and he in them. He was truly said to produce plenty, by bringing rain; to produce famines, by withholding rain; to produce pestilences, by surrounding the people with malarious influences; and to remove pestilences, by removing these influences. This exactly corresponds with the description of your spirit-God.

With this great and beneficent god you have combined the equally great and beneficent god, Helios, the sun, who was, very appropriately, called the “Most High God.” To this latter god, your Sunday was, and still is, sacred. From him it takes its name, and he it is, under another name, that you worship on that day. In Greek, his name was Helios, from which our word holy is said to be derived. Your Holy Bible is simply the *Helios Biblos*, or Sun’s Book. Helios or the Sun was Joshua’s God. “Then spake Joshua to the Lord . . . and said, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,” etc. “The Lord” and the “Sun,” here addressed by Joshua, were, indisputably, one and the same person. This is the god who dwells in heaven, and from whom angels or messengers of light are said to come.

The word ghost also means spirit or breath, and this was supposed to proceed from Helios, the sun. In a certain sense, this supposition was obviously correct. The Holy Ghost, therefore, was simply the breath or spirit of the sun. When received by a person, the holy breath or holy spirit, so it was believed, could be re-breathed or im-

parted by him to other persons. "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind. . . ." This is spoken of the Holy Ghost or Sun's breath, on the occasion of its coming upon the apostles after the resurrection of Jesus. If it was not wind, it certainly was of a very windy nature. "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." As thus communicated by Jesus, the Holy Ghost was evidently nothing more nor less than breath. Having, however, as was supposed, originally come direct from Helios, it was very naturally called Holy Ghost. This Holy Ghost or sun's breath was held to be a god of itself. Combining, however, as it apparently did, with the light of the sun, it and this latter God, the "Father," from whom all things proceed, were supposed, in some incomprehensible manner, to constitute only one god. Thus you see that, in the sun and the air, you have two of the three persons who compose that utterly incomprehensible priestly invention called, from Helios, the "Holy Trinity." The third person, as you all know, is a human being, said to have been indirectly begotten by Helios, the "Father," through the agency of his holy breath or "Holy Ghost." In themselves, all the persons who enter into this "Holy Trinity"—this triple union of the sun, the air, and the human soul or spirit, are very good gods. I condemn only the false teachings of priests concerning them.

As objects of worship, however, how came you by these three persons? Had you anything more to do in the selecting of them to be, in their united capacity, your God, than you had in the selecting of your own sex, race, color, and nationality? Were you not simply born, and equally so, to all of these things? And is the fact that you happened to be born to a certain God, a certain race, a certain color, or a certain nationality, any proof that that is the only true God, true race, true color, or true nationality? Who was it that unerringly led you to be born to

the only true God, while he led the great majority of mankind to be born to false gods?

Had you happened to be born to Buddhism, would you not, almost inevitably, have been just as sincere believers in Buddha, as you now are in Jesus and Jehovah? And, in that case, would the mere fortuitous circumstance of your having been born to him, constitute any proof that Buddha was the only true god? Had an equal number of Buddhists happened to be born to Christianity, they would, almost inevitably, have been just as sincere Christians as you now are. In that case, who would have had the true God, you, the Buddhists, or they, the Christians? Besides this, since it all depends upon the place of one's birth, it is evident that, if yours be the only true God, the country in which you were born, and in which this God alone is worshiped, is the only true country to be born in. Is not that a very bad power, then, whatever it may be, that leads most men to be born in other countries to false gods?

As to the old and hackneyed sophistry concerning the marks of design, said to be visible in nature, I will simply say that no such marks of design exist. In all the phenomena of nature, we see marks, not of design, but of adaptation; of adaptation inevitably brought about by the forces eternally present in matter; of the adaptation of every cause to its effect, and of every effect to its cause. All men, all animals, all individualized objects of every kind, are just such, and such only, as the conditions or causes, from which they proceed, are adapted to produce. These conditions or causes, in their turn, are just such, and such only, as the more remote conditions or causes, from which they proceeded, were adapted to produce. And so of still more remote conditions or causes as we go on backward forever around the great endless chain of causes and effects that constitutes the universe. No individualized object of any kind can possibly come into existence, as such, until all the conditions are present, upon which its

production depends. When, however, all these conditions are present, then it is equally impossible for that object, as such, not to come into existence. As there can be no effect without a cause, so there can be no cause without an effect. Plants and animals, like all other individualized objects, result, as such, from combinations of forces, conditions, and forms of matter which, in their elements at least, have eternally existed in the universe. Plants, animals, etc., were never "made" at all; and, although they are adapted to man's sustenance, they were never produced with reference to his wants, or to anything else. Most of them came into existence before he did, simply because the conditions, necessary to their evolution and perpetuation, preceded the conditions necessary to his evolution and perpetuation. Indeed, since many of them enter into the conditions necessary to his existence, he could not appear until after their appearance. It is folly, however, to argue, as you do, that, since he needs them for his subsistence, they must have been made with reference to his wants. With equal propriety, you might extend this argument, and contend that, since the louse needs man for its subsistence, he must have been made with reference to its wants. In other words, you might very consistently contend that, in man, you discover marks which prove that he was designed to be food for the louse. A theological louse would be very likely to use this very argument.

Admitting, however, that marks of design do exist in nature, to which one of the world's many gods do these marks point as their author? How many chances in a thousand would your God have to be thus pointed out? Besides this, if the beauty and perfection present in nature prove the existence of a great God who designed them, do not the still greater beauty and perfection present in this God just as certainly prove the existence of a still greater God who designed them? Thus you see that, by

proving too much, this stale old argument becomes worse than none at all.

I have now full analyzed the general idea of a Creator, as equally applicable to any one of the world's principal gods, and have thoroughly proved this idea to be utterly inconsistent with reason, science, and common sense. In other words, I have fully proved that there never could have been any such person as the Creator; and that, consequently, there never was any such event as the creation of the universe. I have also proved that all systems of religion, founded, as they all are, upon the false idea of a personal deity, are mere priest-invented systems of slavery, necessarily pernicious in their influences upon the minds, the consciences, and the characters of men.

In conclusion, I challenge any champion of any god to meet me in fair debate and refute my arguments. Convince me that I am in error, and that you do have the truth on your side, and I will at once become an ardent worshiper of your god, no matter which one of the world's many gods he may be. You cannot convince me of these things, however, by merely heaping vile names and cruel persecutions upon me. In the name of your "Lord"—whoever that may be—you have long tried these arguments upon me in vain. By means of these arguments, you have, indeed, at times, succeeded in depriving me of the employment upon which myself and family depended for subsistence. You have, indeed, at times, succeeded in making me go hungry and cold. You have, indeed, at times, succeeded in making me suffer all the anguish that a fond, proud, and sensitive father can feel when he sees absolute want staring his loved little ones in the face. Yes, you have, indeed, succeeded in all these things, but you never have succeeded, and never can succeed, by such means, either in convincing my reason; or in crushing out my manhood. Have you no other kind of arguments to advance upon the subject?—My next two

lectures will be devoted more strictly to the Bible story of creation.

LECTURE SIXTH.

THE CREATION.—(CONTINUED.)

“IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” These first ten words of the Bible contain two assumptions and one assertion. The assumptions are a God and a beginning; the assertion is a creation; and, upon these two assumptions and this one assertion, depend all the balance of the Bible, and all the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Religion. Indeed, one of these assumptions constitutes all the proof there is—if proof it may be called—of the existence of any such being as God.

Without any attempt to prove the correctness of his assumptions, the unknown author of the above extract simply assumes a God and a beginning as things in which the people for whom he wrote already fully believed. Without any attempt to prove the truth of his assertion, he then proceeds to assert that, at the time of this assumed beginning, this assumed God “created the heaven and the earth.” The evidences, then, whatever they may have been, upon which the belief in a God and a beginning was founded, being thus entirely anterior to the Bible, could not, of course, have been derived from its teachings. Indeed, so far from being itself founded upon the Bible, that belief constitutes the foundation upon which the Bible stands. Take away that pre-Bible belief, and the Bible at once becomes a worthless bundle of waste paper.

But what evidences could the people of pre-Bible times have had upon which to found their belief in these things? As to the beginning, none of them could possibly have been present to witness that event; and they did not claim to have any record of it made by any one who was present. As to God, they could have obtained a knowl-

edge of his existence only through the medium of their natural senses, seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling. As to the last three of these senses, you will not venture to assert that they were ever exercised upon him. You may venture to assert, however, that he was seen and heard by the people of pre-Bible times. But you have not a particle of proof by which to establish the truth of this assertion. On the other hand, I have positive proof, which no true Christian can reject, that your assertion is utterly false. In one place, John declares positively that "no man hath seen God at any time." In another place, he just as positively declares that "ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." Several other writers of the Bible testify positively to the same effect. This effectually disposes of your totally unsupported assertion.

Except the various phenomena of nature, therefore, the people of pre-Bible times could not have had anything at all upon which to found their belief in a God and in a beginning. But we have before us, to-day, those very same phenomena. In what respect, then, were those primitive men better prepared than are we now to establish the truth of the matters in question? If, from certain natural phenomena, which they did not understand, they were able to prove the existence of a God and the fact of a beginning, why can not we, from these same phenomena, which we do understand, prove the same things? Did their extreme ignorance render them any better qualified to arrive at the truth in regard to these things than our knowledge renders us? If not, why trust to their judgment, founded upon ignorance, rather than to our own, founded upon knowledge? You very well know that, with all our knowledge, we utterly fail to find, in the phenomena of nature, even the faintest trace of either a God or a beginning. Is it entirely reasonable and safe, then, to take it for granted, as you do, that both of these things were actually found by the grossly ignorant and superstitious men of pre-Bible

times? In what way can extreme ignorance and superstition aid men, more than can knowledge, in the discovery of truth?

The author then goes on and gives in detail an account of the creation, which he asserts took place "in the beginning;" and, as I have already intimated, upon this pretended story of creation depends the existence of what you call the Creator. If, as you assume, there ever was any such creation, then, of necessity, there must have been some such Creator. If, however, on the other hand, as I propose to prove, there never was any such creation, then, of necessity, there never could have been, and hence never was, any such Creator. If, as the Bible plainly teaches, the earth really was made, all on a sudden, and all out of nothing, some six thousand years ago; if it really was made three days before the sun; if it really was made flat and stationary; if it really was placed upon material foundations; if it really does constitute the entire universe; if the sun, the moon, and the stars really are mere appendages or ornaments of the earth; if what we call the sky really is a solid structure or "firmament," placed like a vast inverted bowl over the earth; if, above this firmament there really are vast bodies of water, which were placed there for the benefit of the earth, before the creation of the sun, the moon, or the stars; if there really are windows in this firmament; if, through these windows, a body of water over five miles deep all around the world, really did once pour down from the upper side of this firmament; if, to keep them from falling, the sun, the moon, and the stars, all at an equal distance from the earth, really are "set," or stuck like nails into the under side of this firmament; if these bodies really are a little lower down or nearer the earth than are the waters which are above the firmament; if all the stars really are capable of being shaken out of the firmament, and made to come rattling down, like so many figs, upon the earth; if the firmament itself really is capable of being rolled together like a scroll and taken away; if light really did exist before

there was anything to emit light; if there really were three perfect days before there was any sun to produce day; if all the plants really were brought forth by the earth before any rain had ever fallen to moisten the ground, and before there was any sun to light the air and warm the ground; if, at the same time, these very same plants that thus grew up out of the ground, really were all manufactured without growing at all, and without ever having been in the ground at all; if all the birds really were brought forth by the waters, at the same time with the fish, and in the same manner; if, at the same time, these very same birds, like so many bricks, really were all manufactured directly out of the ground, without ever having been in the water at all; if a serpent really did take a walk with a lady; if he really did converse with her in her own language; if he really did out-reason her in argument; if he really did know the nature of God's promises better than God knew them himself; if he really did outwit God and spoil all his plans; if the first man and the first woman really were both made at the same time and in the same manner; if, notwithstanding this fact, they really were made at different times and in different manners; if the man really was the last thing that was made; if, at the same time, the trees, the birds, and the beasts really were made after he was; if a slice of flesh large enough to make a full-grown woman of really was stolen from the body of a sleeping man, without waking him or even making a sore place; if all these monstrous absurdities, and a thousand more like them, really are absolutely true, then the fact of a creation and the existence of a Creator may be regarded as established. But, in this case, which one of the world's many gods is to have the very doubtful honor of having performed this monstrously absurd creation? Have you any proof that your God performed it? If you had been born to some other god, would you not have been just as sure that he performed it?

Of necessity, the Creator must have existed before the beginning of the creation. But for how long a time before? If for a finite period only, then, as I showed in my last lecture, he himself must, of necessity, have had only a finite existence; and, by going back beyond that finite period, we must inevitably find space and duration existing without any God at all, unless we assume that there was an older God than the Creator. If, however, on the other hand, the Creator had an eternal existence, as you teach that he had, then, as I also showed in my last lecture, there must, of necessity, have lain an eternal, an absolutely undiminishable, period between himself and any point that can possibly be assumed as that at which the work of creation was begun. It is evident, then, that he could never have come to be within less than this same absolutely infinite distance in duration beyond the creative point in question. It is also equally evident, therefore, that he never did reach that creative point at all, and that, consequently, he never did perform any creation at all.

I defy any escape from these conclusions, so damaging to the cause of my opponents. The period in question could not possibly have had an end at the creative point, without having had a beginning somewhere in duration anterior to that point. A period of duration is like a rope. If it has an end in the one direction, it is bound to have an end, or, rather, a beginning in the other. It is bound to be just as long when measured in the one direction as it is when measured in the other. The period in question, then, could not possibly have been finite, when measured forward, toward the creative point, and infinite, when measured backward, from that point.

Of necessity, however, we are bound to place the Creator at either a finite or an infinite distance in duration beyond the point at which we place the creation. In the one case, however, as you plainly see, we make him, of necessity, a finite being, and involve the additional necessity of an infinite series of older Gods. In the other case,

as you also plainly see, we render him, of equal necessity, utterly incapable of ever reaching the creative point at all; and, consequently, utterly incapable of ever performing the creation at all. We are compelled, therefore, as you plainly see, either to accept a finite Creator, with an infinite series of older Gods, or else do without any Creator, or any creation at all. And now which horn of this unpleasant dilemma will you take? Take whichever you may, your cause is lost.

Leaving my opponents, however, to bring their Creator up, in the best way they can, from the utterly unreachable depths of eternity to the creative point—to the end of what they themselves are compelled to admit was an absolutely endless period, let us see what he does after they get him there.

Of necessity, the creation, if it ever occurred at all, must have consisted either in the bringing of matter itself from absolute nonentity into existence, or else simply in the forming of individualized objects, such as worlds, plants, men, etc., from matter which had eternally existed. On the former of these two hypotheses, however, what have we with which to begin the work of creation? Since matter, in every form, is now totally absent, and since the total absence of matter constitutes a perfect vacuum, we have, as I fully proved in my last lecture, both God and space reduced to one and the same infinite, motionless, and necessarily powerless perfect vacuum, from which nothing at all can ever proceed. It is a self-evident truth, that nothing can ever give forth anything which it does not itself contain; and that the total absence of a thing can never become the thing itself. It is self-evident, therefore, that empty space—that a perfect vacuum, the total absence of all matter, such as God now is—can never give forth matter, and can never be itself changed into matter.

All the matter of the universe, then, must, of necessity, have been eternally present in the Creator, just as it is present in him now. As yet, however, there was noth-

ing at all in existence, except the Creator himself. This fact, I presume, my opponents will not care to deny. Of necessity, then, the entire material of the universe, which was thus eternally present in the Creator, must have constituted a part of himself. I have already shown, however, that, of necessity, he must have been himself eternally present in space, just as he is present in it to-day. It is evident, therefore, that, of equal necessity, this material part of himself—this entire matter of the universe—must also have been eternally present in space, where he was, just as it is present therein to-day.

But, in what condition was all this matter as it thus originally existed in God and in space? In a future course of lectures, I shall prove that, of necessity, it was in the very same condition in which it exists at the present time—in the form of worlds of plants, of men, etc. In order, however, to retain some apparent use for the assumed God upon whose supposed existence their unearned incomes depend, my opponents of the priesthood, when forced to admit the eternity of matter, contend, as might be expected, that it originally existed in a state of chaos, spread, like a vapor, throughout infinite space. Having assumed this as the original condition of matter, these holy men proceed to argue, in a very unctuous manner, that a God—the very God, too, of course, upon whom their incomes depend—was absolutely necessary to reduce this matter from its chaotic condition into its present condition of order and of beauty. But how much is their argument worth, founded, as it is, upon a pure and unwarrantable assumption? We have not a particle of proof that any more matter ever existed, at any one time, in a state of chaos, than exists in that state to-day.

Let us suppose, however, that all the matter of the universe was originally thus in a state of chaos. As I have already shown, it necessarily constituted a part of the Creator himself. It is evident, then, that when he reduced it from its state of chaos, into the forms of worlds,

of plants, of men, etc., he must, of necessity, have made an entire change in his own constitution. By this change of form or condition, however, matter did not become any the less a part of God himself. Of necessity, it still remains, as before, inside of him; and, of equal necessity, it still remains, as before, a part of his own constitution. It is evident, then, that every world, every plant, every man, etc., is simply an essential part of God himself. In other words, it is evident that nothing ever has existed, or ever can exist, except God himself alone. We thus find established the truth of that form of Pantheism taught by Spinoza, one of the greatest thinkers of the world, "that there is but one substance, or infinite essence, in the universe, of which the so-called material and spiritual beings and phenomena are only modes, and that this one substance is God" (Webster).

Besides all this, since every action or motion is an effect, and since every effect must, of necessity, have a cause, what was it that caused the Creator, after an eternity of total inaction, to begin moving, in the work of creation, just when he did? You may reply that it was his own will that caused him thus, at that particular moment, to begin moving. But had he never, till that moment, possessed a will? If not, how came he by one at that particular moment? If he had, why did he not move sooner? You may again reply that his will did not begin to act till that very moment. But can there be such a thing as a will that does not act? Does not the will, of necessity, consist entirely in action; in a peculiar action of the mind, or, rather, of the brain? Can will exist without action, any more than light or sound can exist without motion? Besides all this, admitting that the will is something that does itself act, is not its action an effect which is bound to have a cause? What was it, then, that caused the Creator's will, after an eternity of total inaction, to begin acting at that particular moment? Had that cause acted sooner, would not the Creator's will have been bound to

act sooner? What was it, then, that caused that cause to begin acting just when it did? And so of an infinite series of equally necessary but more remote causes. What caused each one of them to begin acting just when it did?

Leaving my opponents, however, to arouse their Creator to action, in the best way they can, after he has entirely lived out, in total inaction, an absolutely endless period of duration, let us see how he proceeds to work, after he is thus aroused.

We now assume that all the matter of the universe is spread, like a motionless vapor, throughout infinite space. Of necessity, we also have it spread, in like manner, throughout the infinite extent of God himself, who, as we have already seen, is, of necessity, co-extensive with space, if he be not space itself. In order to collect this chaotic matter into the forms of worlds, of plants, of men, etc., the Creator must, of necessity, give it motion; and this he can do only by bringing to bear upon it what we call force, of which there are only two kinds: mechanical force, and the force of attraction. Of necessity, then, he must either mechanically scrape together chaotic matter, throughout infinite space, and throughout his own infinite extent, form it into worlds, plants, men, etc., by mechanical means, or else he must infuse into matter itself a certain force or property, which we call attraction, and which will cause the particles of matter to mutually approach one another, and to finally unite in such a manner as to form worlds, plants, men, etc.

And now, which one of these two methods of creation, or, rather, of formation, shall we have the Creator employ? The Bible has him employ the former or mechanical method. This is the only method, therefore, that my subject really requires me to notice. This method, however, involves several difficulties which are very embarrassing to theologians. In order, therefore, if possible, to relieve these holy men, of the difficulties in question, I

will also notice the other method; that by the force of attraction.

Of necessity, the mechanical method requires the Creator to have material hands with which to scrape together and to mold into form the chaotic matter upon which he is operating. In order to have material hands he must, of equal necessity, also have a material body to support these hands. The moment we give him such a body, however, we also, of necessity, give him definite limits, and thus, of equal necessity, render him a finite being, utterly incapable, as I have already shown, of ever occupying the entirety of infinite space, and of working throughout it all, or of even passing over it, in all the ages of eternity, in one single direction. Besides this, we have, in the material body of the Creator, a quantity of matter not in a chaotic condition. Of necessity, therefore, some older God must have reduced it from a chaotic condition into its present form. In order to do this, however, that older God, of necessity, had also to have a material body. This involves the necessity of a still older God, also with a material body, and so on back through an infinite series of gods.

Leaving my opponents, however, to furnish their Creator, in the best way they can, with such a body as he must have, in order to act mechanically upon matter, let us see him at work after he is thus furnished. As we now behold him, he is simply a huge monster, in the shape of a man, without anything to stand upon, plunging about in space, and snatching at particles of chaotic matter just as a school-boy snatches at flakes of falling snow. No wonder that he needed rest after six days of such labor, especially as this was the first exercise of any kind that he had ever taken. It is a well-known fact, however, that, without friction with, or resistance from, something else of a material nature, no material object, whether animate or inanimate, can possibly move, or be moved in a mechanical manner, in any direction. In order, therefore, that he may be able to move about from place to place, while perform-

ing the work of creation, the Creator must, of necessity, have the aid of friction, or of resistance from some other material body more stable than himself. But what other body can there be, while all the matter of the universe is still in a state of chaos? And who could have formed such a body?

Besides all this, it is likewise a well-known fact that there can be no action, of any kind, in any direction, without an exactly equal amount of reaction, of the same kind, in the opposite direction. While the Creator, therefore, is acting upon chaotic matter, in any one direction, he must, of necessity, be at the same time reacting on something else, in the opposite direction. But what is that something else, and who made it? Thus we see that, upon a fair analysis, the Bible method of creation, by mechanical means, becomes not only supremely ridiculous, but also manifestly impossible. Before accepting it, therefore, let us examine the other method—that by means of forces, infused by God into matter itself. If, upon examination, we find this method to be the more practicable of the two, we shall merely have to so change the plain teachings of the Bible, on the subject, as to make them harmonize with the necessary conditions of this newly adopted method of creation. In a thousand other instances, such changes have been promptly made.

This latter method of creation, however, is nothing more nor less than the development theory, which is now advocated by all infidel scientists as the only one that will bear the test of reason, science, and common sense. This is the very theory, if theory it may be called, of which all religionists stand in mortal fear, as the annihilator of their gods. The only difference between the infidel scientists and ourselves is that they, having all the forces in question, eternally existing in matter itself, have no possible use for a God; while we, simply that, in the eyes of the ignorant, we may seem to have a use for one, assume that all these forces originally existed in God alone, and that,

by him, they were imparted to matter which originally possessed no such properties. To sustain this assumption, we have, of course, not a particle of proof. This fact, however, need not trouble us much, since we know that all religions are principally made up of equally unsupported assumptions.

When, however, we come to analyze matter, we find that, even in its chaotic condition, it possesses certain essential properties, and that, among these, are the very forces which, in the hope of retaining an apparent use for a God, we assumed that he had imparted to matter. We thus learn that all the forces, by which matter is fashioned into the forms of worlds, of plants, of men, etc., must, of necessity, have been eternally present in matter, just as they are present in it to-day. We also learn that, of equal necessity, the eternal presence, in matter, of these unceasingly active forces, renders it utterly impossible for the entire material of the universe ever to have been, all at any one time, in a state of chaos; or for the universe, as a whole, to have ever been otherwise than it now is, composed of an infinitude of worlds and of systems of worlds, in every stage of formation and of decomposition. We still further learn that, from their very nature, these forces, like the properties of strength, brittleness, etc., are utterly incapable of existing at all, except in connection with matter. If, then, these forces ever existed at all, in the Creator, they must, of necessity, have existed in the matter which entered into his own composition. But, as I have already shown, this was the entire matter of the universe. In any possible view of the case, therefore, the entire matter of the universe must, of necessity, have eternally possessed all those forces or properties which give rise to all the infinitude of forms in which we now find it. This matter, then, and these forces, having thus eternally existed in connection with each other, render the universe, of necessity, eternal, and, of course, uncreated and self-sus-

taining. This leaves us, like the Infidel scientists, without any possible use for a God.

Besides all this, the Bible positively declares that the entire work of creation was completed within six days from the beginning. This, we all know, could never have been accomplished by means of the forces inherent in matter. These forces never work so rapidly. We are compelled, therefore, either to abandon our creation entirely, or else, like the Bible, to have it promptly performed by mechanical means.

I am aware that many hard-faced theologians attempt to evade the difficulty involved in the shortness of the time, said to have been occupied in the work of creation, by unblushingly assuming, without a particle of proof, that the six days, mentioned in the Bible, were not six days at all, but were six thousand years, six geological epochs, or six long periods of some other kind. By this subterfuge, however, these unfortunate and unscrupulous holy men either directly contradict some of the plainest and most positive assertions of the Bible, or reduce them to the worst kind of nonsense. Besides this, as I shall show, they involve themselves in difficulties far greater than is the one from which they thus escape.

In the first place, the Bible positively declares that the six periods, mentioned in the story of the creation, were "six days;" and we have no more reason to believe that this one particular declaration is either false or figurative, than we have to believe the same in regard to the whole story. If, as used in this story, the word day may be construed to mean a thousand years, or a geological epoch, why may not the word created, as used in this same story, be construed to mean fizzled, or bamboozled, and the word God to mean the great giascutis, or the great jumping jingo? So of all the other words in the story. Why may not each one of them be construed to mean something entirely different from that which it is usually employed to express, and which, as used in this story, it certainly

does express? When once this reckless and totally unauthorized habit of changing the evident meaning of words is begun, where it is to end? May not the whole Bible be thus changed?

The writer declares that "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." This language claims to be a plain and concise description of certain events. If, then, those events actually did occur, just as they are here described, then, of necessity, the language is literally true. If, however, on the other hand, those events did not occur as here described, then, of equal necessity, the language is literally false. In other words, the author tells either a plain truth or a plain lie. His language cannot be figurative. We all know that, in a plain and concise statement of actual facts, figurative language, especially in the form of false names, false dates, and false numbers, would be just as inadmissible—just as impossible, in fact—as would be similar language—similar false names, false dates, and false numbers—in the minutes of a public meeting, in the records of a court of justice, in a promissory note, in a deed to real estate, or in a bill of goods. Figurative language is always used either to strengthen or to beautify the real meaning of the speaker or writer; never to conceal or to change that meaning. Language that is calculated to deceive is false, not figurative. If the language in question be not literally true, it certainly has deceived nearly all that ever read it. In this case, then, it is simply a lie. Among the parties deceived by this lie were the very companions of the writer himself. The Hebrews always did, and do yet, understand the language in question in its strictly literal sense. Indeed, it is only since the demonstrated truths of science have seemed to render a change in the meaning of this language necessary, that theologians have thought of giving it any other than a literal meaning. Besides this, since all the other names mentioned in the story of creation are used in exactly the

same manner as is the word day, they are all bound to be used in a figurative sense, if it is. This, however, reduces the whole story to a mere fable. Let us see what the author himself has to say on the subject. He certainly ought to know what meaning he intends to express. He certainly ought to know, also, how to express that meaning in language that cannot be misunderstood.

“And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night: and the evening and the morning were the first day.” From this, we learn that a day of creation, like a day of our own time, contained an evening and a morning, that it consisted of light, and that it was the opposite of night or darkness. How can theologians have the face to assert that this language describes a thousand years, or a geological epoch?

In Ex. xx, 9-11, we read: “Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work. . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” In Ex. xxxi, 17, this is repeated as follows: “It [the Sabbath] is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and, on the seventh day, he rested and was refreshed.” From all of this, it is evident that the six days, during which God “made heaven and earth,” and the one day, on which “he rested and was refreshed,” were exactly the same kind of days as were the six days during which the Hebrews were required to labor, and the one day on which they were required to rest. And will my opponents have the effrontery to contend that the Hebrews were required to labor during six thousand years, or six geological epochs, and then to rest during one of these same periods? If so, then, as construed by them, the passages, bearing upon the subject in question, would read as follows: “And God called the *light* a *geological epoch*, and the *darkness* he called an *ungeological epoch*, and the *evening* and the *morning* were the first

geological epoch." "Six *geological epochs* shalt thou labor and do all thy work. . . . For in six *geological epochs* the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath *geological epoch* and hallowed it." What an immense improvement my opponents thus make upon the language and the meaning of these passages!

Every intelligent person knows that no serious and sensible passage, such as are those under consideration, containing figurative language, is ever rendered ridiculous by substituting in it the literal for the figurative language. Such a substitution may, indeed, diminish the strength or the beauty of the passage, but never can either change or destroy the sense. The fact, therefore, that the passages in question do become ridiculous, when, for the word day, any other term is substituted, is proof positive that this word, as used in these passages, is not used in a figurative sense. In other words, this fact proves, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the Bible certainly does teach six literal days as the time occupied by the Creator in the work of creation. In order, then, to have the creation completed in so short a time, we must, of necessity, reject the slow-acting physical forces, and have the work performed by the direct mechanical labor of God himself. Indeed, in order to account for a special creation at all, we are bound, in any case, to resort to miracle. We may just as well then, have the greatest miracle possible, by having the work performed in the shortest possible time. Besides this, "on the seventh day," God "rested and was refreshed." This, he could not possibly have done, had he not been previously exhausted; and the fact that he was exhausted, and needed rest and refreshment, is proof positive that he, in person, had been hard at work.

Besides all this, it is a well-established truth that the physical forces have no existence except in action. If, then, these forces existed before the creation, they must, of necessity, have acted before that event. If, however,

they did thus act, and if the tendency of that action was to produce the creation, then, of necessity, this creation must have been produced sooner than it was. This is equally true, no matter at what point in the infinite past we place the creation.

From all this it is evident either that the forces in question did not exist previous to the creation, or that their action had no tendency to produce that result. In neither of these cases, however, could they have possibly produced our special creation. Of necessity, the creation must have begun to result the very moment that the cause which produced it began to act. Whatever that cause may have been, therefore, it could not have been in operation until the very moment in which the creation was begun. Besides this, it is a well-known fact that the physical forces have never finished all their work, and ceased to act; and that they have never needed to rest and be refreshed. It is also a well-known fact that man was never made in the image of any one of the physical forces; that these forces never made a full-grown man in one day; that they never made a full-grown man of mud, and then breathed life into him afterwards; that they never instantly made a full-grown woman of a bone; that they never made the earth flat and stationary; that they never made the sky solid, and stuck the sun, the moon, and the stars into the under side of it to keep them from falling; and that they never carried on a conversation with one another in regard to their work. The Bible, therefore, which declares that all these things were done, undeniably means to teach that they were all done by the direct personal power of God himself.

Let us, however, for a moment, suppose that the six days of creation were, in reality, six geological epochs. Then, according to the teachings of geology, we must give to each of these epochs several hundreds of thousands, if not several millions, of years. In thus granting these immense epochs, we do, indeed, give the Creator an abundance of time in which to perform the creation by means

of the physical forces, which we assume that he infused into matter for that express purpose. We find ourselves, however, totally unable to conceive how these forces, which, as I have already shown, are essential properties of matter, and not properties at all of anything else, could ever have been entirely absent from matter, and present in God, who, as all theologians teach, is a pure spirit, and who, consequently, cannot possess any of the properties of matter. We find it much easier to conceive that these forces have eternally existed in matter, of which they are essential properties. As we have already seen, however, to have them eternally present in matter, leaves us no use at all for a God. On the hypothesis now under discussion, the only use we have for a God is to impart the forces or properties in question to matter which, we assume, had previously existed without any properties at all.

Besides all these things, we now know that, from their very nature, the forces in question are, of necessity, universal in their action; and that, consequently, they could not have been in operation on the earth, during three entire geological epochs, before they came into operation in the sun, the moon, or any other portion of the material universe. Indeed, we know that their operation here, as we behold it, depends upon their co-operation in all the balance of the matter of the universe. Besides this, we know that these forces, with their uniform action, could never have been three times as long in forming the earth alone, as they were in forming all the other bodies of the universe. We know, too, that they never could have formed the earth first, and then, as a mere appendage, have fitted all the balance of the universe to it afterwards. We know still further, that they never could, during three geological epochs, have produced perfect day, with evening and morning, without any sun, moon, stars, or other source of light. Finally, we know that they never could have at last made the sun merely to divide the already-existing day from the already-existing night.

From the very beginning, the Bible has, upon the earth, an abundance of water; and has God devote the entire secondary geological epoch to the totally unnecessary work of placing an equal abundance above the earth, on the upper side of a solid structure, called the firmament, into the under side of which, and consequently below this body of water, he long afterwards stuck the sun, the moon, and the stars, to keep them from falling. Notwithstanding this great abundance of water, however, so conveniently situated right over the earth, and with windows in the firmament, through which, at any moment, it might have been made to fall, the Bible does not have a drop of water fall upon the earth during the almost countless ages of the first three geological epochs. That must have been quite a long dry spell; or, rather, it would have been if there had been any sun to dry the ground. It is well, perhaps, that there was no sun. But, without the agency of the sun, or some other source of heat, how were those vast bodies of water elevated to the upper side of the firmament, to their position above the places in which, to keep them from falling, the sun, the moon, and the stars were set or stuck, in the quaternary epoch, untold ages afterwards. We have now given God millions of years in which to perform all his works by means of the physical forces, and we are now supposing him to perform them by these means alone. In the case of this wonderful hydraulic achievement, therefore, it will not do to have him resort to the miraculous interposition of his own direct personal power. How, then, were those vast bodies of water elevated to their position above the stars?

Besides all this, the Bible declares that God made "every plant of the field *before* it was in the *earth*, and every herb of the field *before* it *grew*." If these plants and herbs had been produced in the ordinary way, by means of the physical forces, would they not have had to be in the *earth*, and would they not also have had to *grow*? Would they not also have required both *rain* and *sun*,

neither of which had yet been created? Do not all these things, then, like the manufacture of a full-sized man directly from a pile of dirt, and of a full-sized woman directly from a small bone, prove, beyond all possible dispute, that God was performing the work of creation by direct manual labor, and not by means of the physical forces?

We thus see that, instead of having gained anything by changing the simple days of creation into geological epochs, our hard-faced theologians have seriously injured their own cause. By resorting to this change at all, they themselves condemn the literal day theory as something that cannot possibly bear the test of reason, science, and common sense. If they could still defend this theory, they would certainly do so, as did the whole Christian Church for fifteen centuries. By means of the change, however, which they feel themselves forced to make, in the plain reading and the evident meaning of the passages in question, they greatly increase the absurdity of the whole story. This they do by making the earth stand motionless, rainless, moonless, sunless, starless—the only body in the universe—and yet blessed with day and night, and clothed with verdure, for countless ages, instead of for only three days. And now, having fully demonstrated that the Bible certainly means to teach a mechanical creation, performed directly “by the hand of God,” within the space of six literal days, I will proceed to analyze the creation as thus described.

In the first place, I wish to call your attention to the fact that the Bible contains two entirely different accounts of the creation. The one of these accounts occupies the entire first chapter, and the first three verses of the second chapter of Genesis. The other begins at the fourth verse and occupies the balance of the second chapter. Between these two accounts, which were evidently written at different times and by different authors, there are several grave

discrepancies, to some of which I will now briefly call your attention.

The former of these two accounts has the creation occupy six days; has the plants grow, just as they grow now; has the plants, herbs, trees, etc., all made at the same time; has the fowls all brought forth by the waters, just as were the fish; and has the man and the woman both made at the same time, in the same manner, and at the very close of the creation. The latter account has the creation occupy only one day; has every form of vegetation manufactured, and not produced by growth; has the plants and herbs made at one time, and the trees at another; has the fowls, like so many bricks, all manufactured directly "out of the ground;" has the man made before the trees, the birds, and the beasts; and has the woman made long after the man, and in a very different manner. Can the two accounts both be true?

I have already noticed the first verse of the Bible, in which a God and a beginning are assumed and a creation is asserted. We next read that "the earth was without form and void." Since the earth was then, as it is now, a material body sufficiently substantial to sustain the waters of the great deep, it could not have been thus "without form and void." This description, therefore, is evidently incorrect.

We next read that God said, "Let there be light;" and that, as a direct result of his having said this, "there was light." But who knows that he ever said this? Who was present on that occasion to hear his words, and to record them? To whom did he speak these words, in what language, and for what purpose? If he was all alone, could the speaking of these words have helped him any in his works? Could there have been any power in these words, when he himself possessed all the power there was? Can it be that, like a common juggler, he was merely repeating utterly useless mummeries? If so, was he not acting very foolishly, seeing there was no one present to be either

amused or deceived by his mummeries? His words could not possibly have been of any service to himself. If, then, they were really of any use at all, there must, of necessity, have been some other person or persons present to hear them, and to act upon them. This is the only rational conclusion to which we can possibly arrive. Indeed, the first clause of the passage in question is a command to some one to produce light. The second clause is a declaration that the command was promptly executed. Who, then, was it that received and executed that command? If the whole story—if the whole Bible, in fact—be not a mere mass of monstrous absurdities, there must, of necessity, have been a plurality of Gods present on that occasion. Indeed, the Hebrew Elohim, which is here translated God, is in the plural number, and signifies, not a single God, but a deific corporation or congress, consisting of several Gods. The correctness of this view is fully established by a great number of such passages as the following: “And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness;” “And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as *one* of *us*, to know good and evil,” etc. Of these Gods—these members of the Elohim—there were at least three, that number having afterwards appeared to Abraham, and dined with him, all at one time, and all as entirely distinct persons. Modern trinitarians, however, combine these three distinct persons into one monstrous God with three heads, and have the language in question spoken by one of these heads to the other two. This triple-headed monster seems to be simply a slightly distorted copy of the grand old Trimurti, or Trinity of Hindoo Mythology, in which Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva the Destroyer are thus united.

We next read, “And God saw the light that it was good.” From this remark, we learn that God had never before seen light. Indeed, how could he have ever before seen it, when it had never before had any existence? So of everything else. Since there had

never before been anything at all to see, it is evident that, of necessity, he had never before seen anything at all. And this is equally true of all his other senses. Since there had never before been anything at all to hear, to feel, to taste, or to smell, it is evident that, of necessity, he had never before heard, felt, tasted, or smelled anything at all. So also of his thought. Since thought necessarily requires an object, and since there had never before been anything at all to think of, it is evident that, of necessity, he had never before thought of anything at all. In short, it is evident that, of necessity, he had spent an absolute eternity without exercising any of the attributes of a conscious being. It is no wonder, then, that, on this occasion, he so promptly and so incorrectly pronounced "very good" all the lice, the fleas, the bed-bugs, the mosquitoes, the serpents, the devils, etc., that met his view. The only wonder is that he made so few mistakes as he did. But who designed his faculties of seeing, hearing, thinking, etc., and so exactly adapted them to the yet uncreated—to the yet unthought-of objects upon which he was finally to exercise them?

"And God divided the light from the darkness." From this it would seem that light and darkness had previously been united, or sadly intermingled with each other. We now know, however, that darkness is merely the absence of light. We also know that nothing can be united or intermingled with its own absence. Where light, then, is present, its absence or darkness cannot possibly be; and vice versa. Since, from their very nature, they must, of necessity, have always been separate, how could God have "divided the light from the darkness?" As reasonably might it be said that sound and silence had once been united, and that God had divided them. So of any other pair of essential opposites.

We now know that light moves, in straight lines, with inconceivable velocity, and that it cannot possibly exist, even for an instant, except while thus in motion. Indeed,

we now know that light is nothing but motion of a peculiar kind, in what, for the want of a better term, we call ether. Destroy the motion, and you annihilate the light. The ancient pagans, however, of whom the unknown author of Genesis was evidently one, supposed that light and darkness were two very rare substances, or vaporous bodies, of different colors, which might exist either in motion or at rest. They also supposed that these two substances could exist either separate or in union with each other. Having, for some reason unknown to us, assumed that light and darkness originally existed in a state of chaos, sadly intermingled with each other, those pagans were compelled to assume, further, that God, who, with them, stood for any and for every force, power, or cause which they could not understand, had divided them into two distinct masses or clouds, the one of which then constituted day, the other, night. You will notice that, by exactly canceling each other, these two assumptions leave us with light and darkness separate, just as they would have been had there been no assumption at all. Indeed, this is equally true of the entire universe. By first assuming that all the matter of the universe was once in a state of chaos, and then assuming a God to reduce this state of chaos to one of order, we have the universe all in a state of order, just as we would have had it if neither one of these assumptions had ever been made.

Those pagans supposed, further, that the two unlike masses or clouds in question, were entirely independent of the sun, or of any other material body. From this, their standpoint of gross ignorance, therefore, they could see nothing absurd in having day and night make three or four trips by themselves, around the earth, or rather across her face, before there was any sun, or any other source of light. Until recently, this was also the doctrine of the entire Christian Church. It is still the doctrine of the greater portion of that Church. Indeed, I cannot understand how any true Christian can reject a doctrine so plainly taught

in the Bible. In the Douay, or Catholic Bible, we find a note on the passage in question, which says : " God created on the first day light, which being moved from east to west, by its rising and setting, made morning and evening."

As I have already remarked, the Bible does not have the sun created to produce day, but simply to divide the already-existing day from the already-existing night. From this it would seem that day and night, the white cloud and the black one in question, were inclined to again become intermixed with each other, as they had been before God divided them. To prevent them, therefore, from thus flowing together and intermixing, God found it necessary to place an impassable barrier between them. Hence the making of the sun, and the placing of it on the dividing line between day and night, or, in other words, between the white cloud in question, and the black one. We now know, however, that the sun is the only source or cause of day ; and that, consequently, there never could have been, and never were, as the Bible teaches, three perfect days before there was any sun to produce day. We know that, from its very nature, light cannot possibly exist without a constant source or cause. It is evident, therefore, that it never did thus exist, without a source, as the Bible says it did, and that it never did pass, as the Bible also says it did, like a mass of white vapor, three or four times around the earth, or across her face. As reasonably might we assume that sound and silence, like two dissimilar but invisible bodies, had thus passed around or across the earth, before the creation of anything capable of producing sound.

Besides all these things, we know that, without the sun, the earth could never, for three whole geological epochs, or even for three whole days, have retained her place in her orbit, or performed any of her other planetary functions. Several theologians have admitted this fact, and have taught that, from the beginning, the sun was, of necessity, present in the heavens, but that, until the fourth day, or the quaternary geological epoch, the weather was

so foggy that his presence there was not discovered. So of all the other heavenly bodies. These theologians contend that they were merely discovered, not made, as the Bible says they were, on the fourth day. This interpretation, however, as you plainly see, simply makes the story, as told in the Bible, a lie. The great commentator, Dr. Clarke, sees and freely admits the insurmountable difficulties involved in this matter. He is compelled to resort to the assumption of the miraculous interposition of God's direct personal power to keep the earth in order until the completion of the solar system. Dr. Clarke also admits that there could not have been, and consequently were not, three or any other number of perfect days before there was any sun to produce day. The learned Doctor, therefore, is compelled to assume that, as told in the Bible, the story is a lie. Instead, however, of assuming, as do many other theologians whom I have noticed, that the word day, as used in this story, means a geological epoch, the Doctor makes the rather novel assumption that it means *caloric* or *latent heat*. This is quite a different construction from that put upon the same word by our other theological assumptionists. To all this, I will simply say that if the author of Genesis had meant caloric, he would doubtless have used this word, or an equivalent, and not the word light or day, to express that meaning. It is not at all likely, however, that he had the slightest idea of the existence of any such thing as caloric or latent heat. And even if he meant caloric, how could it have consisted of light; how could it have been the opposite of darkness; how could it have produced three perfect days, with evenings and mornings?

If Dr. Clarke is correct, then we should read: "And God said, let there be *caloric*; and there was *caloric*. And God divided the *caloric* from the darkness. And the *caloric* he called *caloric*, and the darkness he called night; and the evening and the morning were the first *caloric*." "Six *calorics* shalt thou labor and do all thy work. . . . For in six *calorics* the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea,"

etc. To what monstrous absurdities are even the most learned theologians driven in their desperate attempts to prop up, as true history, this supremely ridiculous story of a special creation!

We next read: "And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters; and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament heaven." Having, to some extent, already noticed this firmament, I will now give it only a very brief notice. The word firmament, with very little change of form, and no change at all of meaning, comes from the Latin *firmamentum*, which means a solid structure used as a foundation, a support, etc.—something designed to render firm whatever rests upon it. The corresponding Hebrew word, *rakia*, has the same meaning combined with the idea of expansion. Every person, well posted in Latin and in Hebrew, knows that I am correct in these statements; and any of you may satisfy yourselves of the same fact by consulting your own Bible Dictionaries.

Until about three hundred years ago, the belief was almost universal, and especially so in the Christian Church, that the sky was a solid concavo-convex structure, placed, like a vast inverted bowl, over the earth, or, like a hollow sphere, all around it. In various languages, and by various authors, but always with the same meaning, this structure was called the *rakia*, the *firmamentum*, the *crystalline*, etc. The belief was also equally general, that, to keep them from falling, the sun, the moon, and the stars, all necessarily at an equal distance from the earth, were stuck like nails into the under or concave surface of this structure, while, firmly founded on its upper or convex surface, were the thrones and the dwelling-places of the gods. In addition to these gods, thrones, and dwelling-places, there were also believed to be, on the upper side of this firmament, and, of course, a little above the sun,

the moon, and the stars, which were on the under side, vast bodies of water which, at the pleasure of the gods, could be made to pour down upon the earth, through windows or openings made in the firmament for that purpose. When reduced to a systematic form, these various ideas, all of which are clearly taught in the Bible, constituted substantially what was known as the Ptolemaic or Geocentric System of Astronomy. To this system, now demonstrated to be utterly false, the Papal seal of infallibility was once given, thus rendering a belief in it binding upon the consciences of all men, and absolutely necessary to salvation. Whether this seal has ever been removed or not, I am not able to say. The seal, however, makes no difference. As I have already said, the Bible clearly teaches all the doctrines of this system, and thus renders a belief in them binding upon every true Christian, and absolutely necessary to his salvation.

Claiming to write from the Hebrew Scriptures, Josephus says that God placed a firmament or "crystalline" around the earth, "and put it together in a manner agreeable to the earth, and fitted it for giving moisture and rain, and for affording the advantage of dews." Mark the expression "*put it together*," etc. Such language could have been used only in speaking of the several parts of a material structure. Upon this idea of a solid sky or firmament, placed over a flat and stationary earth, is founded the language which I have quoted from the Bible. We now know, however, that no such solid sky or firmament ever existed. We cannot, therefore, help knowing also that the Bible story of creation, which makes this imaginary firmament absolutely necessary to the structure of the universe, is a baseless, if not a pernicious, fabrication.

For want of time, I shall be obliged to omit any further notice of the creation of the plants, the birds, the beasts, etc., and devote the balance of this lecture to a discussion of the creation of man.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after

our likeness . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. i, 26, 27). "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. ii, 7). In the former of these two passages, we again have proof that a plurality of persons, in their corporate or united capacity, called God, were engaged in the creation. We must either admit this to be a fact, or else charge God with having, on that occasion, like a common juggler, frequently repeated, entirely to himself, certain meaningless mummeries, and then with having, afterwards, published to the world this extremely silly proceeding. In explanation of the language here used, the Douay Bible contains a note which says: "God speaketh here in the plural number to insinuate the plurality of persons in the Deity." This note, which is endorsed by a large majority of the Christians of the world, substantially admits all that I claim: that God or Deity, like the corresponding Hebrew Elohim, is the name, not of one person, but of a corporation or congress composed of at least three persons.

These several members of the Deity are represented in the Bible as being entirely distinct individuals, who had to make their thoughts known to one another, by means of words, as in the case before us, and who sometimes separated and went on entirely different journeys, as we learn from the eighteenth chapter of Genesis. From the fact that man was made in the image of each one of these three persons, we learn that they were all of the same form, and all of the human form. Had they been of different forms, man evidently could have been made in the image of only one of them; and, had they been of any other than the human form, man, in receiving the form he did, would evidently not have been made in their image at all. Besides this, they all three appeared to Abraham, and dined with him in the form of men.

I am aware that, in order to avoid a too plain adoption of the favorite old pagan doctrine of polytheism, our more modern trinitarians have united these three entirely distinct persons, whom they call the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, into one triple monster called the Trinity. As I have already said, this monstrosity seems to have been copied from the mythology of the Hindoos. "The Father" represents Brahma the Creator; the "Son" represents Vishnu the Preserver or Savior; and the "Holy Ghost" represents Siva, not in his character of Destroyer, it is true, but in his more amiable character of Child Begetter. To each of the three heads of this monster, our trinitarians, in imitation of the Hindoos, grant the power of separate thought, and separate speech, and have the language in question spoken by one of these heads, to the other two. If, however, this view be correct, how does it happen that man, who is declared to have been made in the image of this monster, is not a triple-headed monster also? On this hypothesis, is not every man undeniably entitled to three heads? How does it happen, then, that men have been put off with only one head each, and that, in many cases, a very small one almost entirely destitute of brains. I would advise every man, who really believes this three-headed-monster doctrine, to demand the other two heads, to which he is so clearly entitled, and of which he is so greatly in need.

I am also aware that theologians of the present day unblushingly assume that it was something which they call man's soul, and not man himself, that was created in the image of God. The Bible, however, which they thus directly contradict, certainly has the first human body, without any soul at all, made in the image of God, and has this same soulless body constitute the entire man. This, I will now prove.

In the first place, then, the Bible declares that "God created man in his own image." It also declares that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground."

From this, it is evident that "man" and the "image of God" are one and the same thing, and that, of necessity, they are composed of the very same "dust of the ground." It was this material body, then, this "dust of the ground," and not an immaterial, invisible, impalpable, incomprehensible something called a soul, that was made in the "image of God." Of necessity, this "dust of the ground" became the "image of God," the very moment it became "man;" and it became both the very moment it received the human form and organization. As yet, it had neither life nor soul. Nevertheless, it was a perfect man, and a perfect "image of God." Physical shape and organization, and these alone, made it both. Neither life nor soul, therefore, was necessary to constitute this creature either a "man" or an "image of God," and neither one of them was used in making him such. From all this, it is evident that God himself must have possessed just such a body as he gave to man. Man's body could not have been an image of anything but a similar body. As I have already shown, however, the moment we give God a body, or shape of any kind, we make him a finite being utterly incapable of ever having created the universe. I thus again prove the story of the creation to be, at best, a mere fable.

But how do I know that, when first completed "in the image of God," man had neither life nor soul? How do I know that he was "dust of the ground" and nothing else? Read again the latter of the two passages which I quoted, and you will learn how I know these facts. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." From this it is evident that this "dust of the ground" became a man, and was spoken of as such, the moment it received the form and the organization that constitute man. As yet, however, he was evidently a lifeless man, and there was no such thing in existence as "a living soul." It was not until after he was complete, both as a man and as "the

image of God," that he received "the breath of life, . . . and became a living soul." Neither life nor soul, then, could possibly have been present in man, when he first became such, and when he first became "the image of God."

Whether man ever came to possess a soul at all or not, is a question which, on the present occasion, I shall not attempt to determine. Indeed, it is a question with which this discussion has very little to do. It is certain, however, that no soul was given to man at the time of his creation; and, if any such thing was ever given to him afterwards, we have no account of that event. Indeed, outside of the evidences given by Spiritualism—and these very few of you will accept—we have not a particle of proof that any such thing as a soul ever had a real existence. Your priests would fain have you believe that, at the time of which I am speaking, God breathed an immortal soul into the man's nostrils. As the more intelligent of these priests all well know, however, the Bible does not teach any such doctrine. It does not have him, on that, or on any other occasion breathe anything into man's nostrils except common air or breath; and this it has him do simply to start the man to breathing, and, consequently, to living. It represents God as starting this man to breathing and to living, just as we sometimes re-start a drowned man to breathing and to living, by forcing breath into his nostrils. The machinery of life being all perfect in the man, this was the most natural way of setting that machinery in motion. The Bible does not represent God as having made man immortal at all. On the contrary, it represents him as taking special pains to prevent man from living forever. This it has him do by preventing man from partaking of the tree of life which, if eaten by man, would, indeed, have enabled him to "live forever." In this case, however, man's immortality would have been of his body, of that which was made "in the image of God," and not of any such thing as a soul. Indeed, until the later part of

their career as a nation, after they had adopted many of the opinions of the Babylonians and other gentile nations, the Hebrews themselves, the makers of the Bible, seemed to have no idea of any future state of existence. All their hopes, all their fears, all their rewards, and all their punishments had reference to this life alone.

So far from representing a soul as an invisible and intangible something that can be breathed either into a man or out of him, the Bible represents it as being nothing more nor less than the man himself, the material body which was formed "of the dust of the ground." In other words, it makes the noun, soul, a synonym of the noun man, and uses it simply to avoid the immediate repetition of this latter noun. After representing God as starting man to breathing, it says that, in consequence of the starting of his machinery of life in this way, "man became a living soul." In place of the word soul, in the text, repeat the synonymous word man, and you have the whole meaning clearly expressed: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man [hitherto without life, by being thus started to breathing] became a living man." This tells it all. While the party in question was a lifeless man, he was, of necessity, also a lifeless soul. When he became a living man, he also, of necessity, "became a living soul." That the word soul, as used here, and in other parts of the Old Testament, does simply mean man or person, and that it is used with reference to the body alone, is rendered still more clear by a vast number of such passages as the following: "And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazer, and smote the king thereof with the sword. . . . And they smote all the *souls* that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly *destroying* them: there was not any left to breathe" (Josh. xi, 10, 11). Could such immaterial and immortal souls as my opponents now profess to deal in, have been thus utterly destroyed "with the edge of the sword?"

“And levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war, which went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, both of the *persons*, and of the *beeves*, and of the *asses*, and of the *sheep*” (Num. xxxi, 28). From this, we learn that the *beeves*, the *asses*, and the *sheep* were as much souls, or as much possessed of *souls*, as were the *persons*. But what were the *souls* of which this levy was to consist? Were they the *material bodies* of the *beeves*, the *asses*, etc., or were they the *invisible*, and *immaterial spirits* of these *creatures*? From all this, it is evident that, to find any other soul than the corporeal man himself—any other soul than that which was formed “of the dust of the ground”—we must search elsewhere than in this story. Indeed, we must search elsewhere than in the entire writings of the Old Testament.

Before he was started to breathing, the man in question was like a new watch, which is perfect in all its parts, and in all its capacities, but which has not been set to running. After he was started to breathing, he was like the same watch after it is set to running. Stop the motion of the machinery in the running watch, and it becomes precisely what it was before it was set to running. So stop the motion of the machinery in the living man, and he becomes exactly what he was before that machinery was put in motion. As no soul, or anything else, goes into a watch, when its machinery is put in motion, or goes out of it when that motion ceases, so no soul, or anything else, necessarily goes into a man when his machinery is put in motion, or goes out of him when that motion ceases. As the only necessary difference between the watch when running or living, and when stopped or dead, consists solely in the difference of condition, as to motion or rest, of its machinery; so the only necessary difference between the man, when running or living, and when stopped or dead, consists solely in the difference, as to motion or rest, of the condition of his machinery. In other words, living con-

sists solely in the motion of the machinery of life ; dying, solely in the cessation of that motion.

Having thus fully proved the story of the creation to be, at best, only an absurd pagan fable, I now conclude by challenging any champion of that story, who is in good standing among his own sect, to meet me, and discuss the subject in fair public debate.

LECTURE SEVENTH.

THE CREATION.—(CONCLUDED.)

IN my last two lectures, I charged the Bible with teaching that the earth is the principal body in the universe ; that it is flat and stationary ; that the sky is a solid structure or firmament, placed, like a vast inverted bowl, over the earth ; that, to keep them from falling, the sun, the moon, and the stars, all necessarily at an equal distance from the earth, are stuck, like nails, into the under side of this firmament ; and many other doctrines, which mark it, not as the word of an all-wise God, but as the work of men too ignorant, or too regardless of truth, to be ranked among respectable writers. Most of these charges, I proved, at the time that I made them. Knowing, however, that many of our champions of the Bible unblushingly deny that it teaches these doctrines, I will devote a portion of this lecture to still further proofs that it certainly does teach them.

Forgetting sixteen hundred years of their own dark history ; forgetting how often they themselves have proved that the Bible certainly does clearly teach these doctrines ; forgetting how many brave men they have burnt for rejecting these doctrines ; these hard-faced champions of the Bible are now wont to quote one obscure passage to prove that the Bible teaches the true system of the universe—an earth revolving in space, etc. This passage is found in

Job xxvi, 7, and reads as follows : "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." As drowning men catch at straws, so do these champions of the Bible, in the desperation to which the truths of science have driven them, catch at this extremely vague passage, which is the only one, in the whole Bible, that can possibly be so tortured as to make it indicate, on the part of its writer, even the faintest idea of the true system of the universe.

The great Commentator, Dr. Clarke, however, one of the ablest defenders the Bible ever had, so far from making this passage teach the true system of the universe, makes it, like all the other passages of the Bible, that bear upon the subject at all, teach a flat and stationary earth. He says : " . . . What is here stated may refer to the opinion that the earth was a vast extended plain, and the heavens poised upon it, resting upon this plain, all round the horizon. Of the south the inhabitants of Idumea knew nothing ; nor could they have any notion of the inhabitants in that hemisphere. [Hangeth the earth upon nothing.] The Chaldee says : He layeth the earth upon the waters, nothing sustaining it."

Could this passage, with any appearance of fairness, have been so construed as to make it refer to the true system of the universe, would not Clarke have been sure to so construe it? Was he not, on all occasions, eager to defend the Bible, as far as possible, from the grave charge of teaching the many false doctrines which I have enumerated? He was a man of too much intelligence, however, to attempt any such construction. He finds that hanging "the earth upon nothing," means simply spreading it out flat upon the waters. Among the ancients, this idea was a very common and a very natural one. To them, the shores or edges of the land appeared like the edges of a vast raft, or floating garden, partially sunk in the water, while the springs that gushed from the ground, in various places, appeared to be coming up from the "great deep," upon which

the earth was supposed to rest. A great portion of the waters of the deluge was supposed to have gushed up from this "great deep," through openings in the earth, made for that purpose. In Gen. vii, 11, we read: ". . . The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up: . . . " In Gen. viii, 2, we also read: "The fountains of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped. . . ." These "fountains of the great deep," which were thus "broken up" at one time and "stopped" at another, could have been nothing else than vast openings in the ground, through which the waters gushed up from the mighty floods upon which the earth, like an immense floating garden, was supposed to rest.

Thus is turned against themselves the only passage in the whole Bible that theologians have ever had the effrontery to claim as teaching, even by implication, the true system of the universe. Indeed, when we come to properly analyze this passage, we find that its very language is such as to entirely exclude the idea of its ever having been used with reference to a globe revolving in space. "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place." Could Job have regarded the earth as a globe, when he believed that its northern part had been thus "stretched out?" And could he have regarded it as a body revolving in space, when he believed that its northern part, unlike the balance of it, rested, in a special manner, over what he calls "the empty place?" Would he not have perceived that the northern part of a revolving body could never have remained thus specially "stretched out over a stationary empty place?" Does any portion of this language apply to the earth as it now exists? Do we not now know that, so far from being thus "stretched out," the northern part of the earth is depressed or drawn in? And do we not also know that this northern part no more rests over "the empty place" than does any other part?

Admitting, however, that this passage does indicate something like a correct idea of the true system of the

universe, what do my opponents gain by the admission? Of necessity, the language is either *literal* or *figurative*. If it be *literal*, then, in teaching the true system of the universe, it undeniably stands as a direct *contradiction* to the many other passages, which, as I shall soon show, certainly do teach a flat and stationary earth, a solid sky or firmament, etc. In thus contradicting these other passages, therefore, this passage tends to destroy the credibility of the Bible, as a whole, and thus injures the cause of my opponents. If, however, the language be *figurative*, then, of course, it is not to be understood that the author regarded as *real* that which he expressed by it. It is a well-known fact that no writer or speaker intending to use *figurative* language, in the description of an object, ever thinks of such a thing as describing that object by what he understands to be its *literal* or *real* characteristics. Indeed, a *literal* or *real* description cannot be *figurative*. It is evident, then, that if Job intended to use figurative language, when he described the universe by what we now know to be its true characteristics, he certainly condemned these characteristics as being, in his opinion, utterly unreal or imaginary. Job, therefore, in thus condemning as false the true system of the universe, certainly did not mean to teach this system. In this case, then, as in the other, the passage injures the cause of my opponents.

It is also a well-known fact that no intelligent writer ever uses, as figures, ideas which are generally understood to be literally true by the people for whom he writes. In Europe and in America the idea now generally prevails that the earth is a globe; that she literally revolves on her own axis, thus giving us the alternations of day and night; and that she also literally revolves in an orbit around the sun, thus giving us a change of seasons. This being the prevailing idea upon the subject, no European or American writer, be his own ideas what they may, would ever think of such a thing as giving this very description of the earth, and yet intend his language to be understood as fig-

urative. So in regard to the writers of the Bible. Among the people of their time, the idea of a flat and stationary earth, a solid sky, etc., were generally accepted as literally correct. When, therefore, these writers represented the earth as flat and stationary, the sky as a solid structure or firmament, etc., and this they all did, they were giving what they very well knew the people would accept as literally true descriptions of these things. Knowing this fact, these writers, no matter what their own views on the subject may have been, must, of necessity, have intended their writings to be understood in a strictly literal sense.

From all this, it is evident that, if the writers in question themselves believed the earth to be flat and stationary, the sky to be a solid structure, etc., they were too ignorant to write anything, on these subjects at least, worthy of our acceptance. If, on the other hand, they deliberately deceived the people, by giving what they themselves knew to be false descriptions of these things, then it is equally evident that they were too dishonest to write anything, on any subject, worthy of our acceptance. In either case, their writings are totally worthless.

If, as some of my opponents claim, the writers of the Bible themselves understood the true system of the universe, why did they never impart a knowledge of that system to the people who looked to them, and, in many cases, paid them for instruction? They saw that, in regard to these things, the people were in error. Why, then, did they, in all their writings, confirm that error? Why did they not rather correct it? Did God inspire them to bind the people to error, as they certainly did, by endorsing that error in all their writings? By this endorsement, they rendered it impossible for any but infidels, who reject their writings, to ever escape from the erroneous ideas of a flat and stationary earth, a solid sky, a day independent of the sun, etc. The Hebrews always did understand these descriptions of the earth, the sky, etc., in a strictly

literal sense. And did the Hebrews never correctly understand their own writings?

Besides all this, how did it happen that, for more than fifteen hundred years, the Christians also universally understood the Bible to teach a flat and stationary earth, a solid sky, and all the other false doctrines which I now charge it with teaching? If, in teaching that the earth is a globe revolving in space, Galileo was simply promulgating a doctrine of the Bible, how did the highest authorities of the church manage to *prove*, as they did, that *his* teachings, on this subject, were diametrically *opposed* to those of the *Bible*? Why did they punish him as a heretic, and why did they compel him to recant? So of Bruno. If, in teaching that there are *other worlds* besides the *earth*, he was simply promulgating a doctrine of the Bible, how did the highest authorities of the church manage to *prove*, as they did, that *his* teachings, on this subject, were diametrically *opposed* to those of the *Bible*? And why did they burn him as a heretic? Were there, for more than fifteen centuries, no Christians at all, not even the apostles themselves, who had sufficient intelligence to correctly understand the plain teachings of the Bible on this subject? Were there none sufficiently intelligent to discover the beautiful harmony, had there been any such, which my opponents would fain have us believe exists between the teachings of the Bible, and the demonstrated truths of science? Has it, indeed, been left, for thousands of years, for my opponents alone to discover this beautiful harmony, which none before them ever even suspected to exist, and which, even now, none others are able to perceive? Finally, how did it happen that the true system of the universe was discovered, and made known to the world, not by the champions of the Bible, but by those whom these champions bitterly opposed and persecuted, as heretics and infidels, whose teachings had a direct tendency to overthrow the Bible, and who, consequently, were fit only for torments, both in this world and in the world

to come? But let us see what Dr. Wm. Smith, in his Bible Dictionary, has to say on the subject.

Of the firmament, he says : “ The Hebrew term *rakia*, so translated, is generally regarded as expressive of simple *expansion*, and is so rendered in the margin of the A. V. (Gen. i, 16). The root means to expand by beating, whether by the hand, the foot, or any instrument. It is especially used of beating out metals into thin plates (Ex. xxxix, 3; Num. xvi, 39). The sense of *solidity*, therefore, is combined with the ideas of *expansion* and *tenuity* in the term. The same idea of *solidity* runs through all the references to the *rakia*. In Ex. xxiv, 10, it is represented as a *solid floor*. So again in Ezek. i, 22–26, the firmament is the floor on which the throne of the Most High is placed. Further, the office of the *rakia* in the economy of the world demanded *strength* and *substance*. It was to serve as a division between the waters above and the waters below (Gen. i, 7). In keeping with this view the *rakia* was provided with windows and doors through which the rain and the snow might descend (Gen. vii, 11; Is. xxiv, 18; Mal. iii, 10; Ps. lxxviii, 23). A secondary purpose which the *rakia* served, was to support the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars (Gen. i, 14), in which they were fixed as *nails*, and from which, consequently, they might be said to drop off” (Is. xiv, 12; xxxiv, 4; Matt. xxiv, 29). Dr. Smith also says: “ The earth was regarded not only as the central point of the universe, but as the universe itself, every other body—the heavens, sun, moon, and stars—being subsidiary to, and, as it were, the complements of the earth.” So much for the testimony of one of the ablest Bible critics of modern times.

You will notice that Dr. Smith speaks of the heavens as a body, and enumerates it with the sun, the moon, and the stars, as one of “ the complements of the earth.” By many, the heavens or sky was supposed to be composed of metallic plates. Indeed, as I have just proved by Dr.

Smith's testimony, this is the primary meaning of the Hebrew word *rakia*.

The testimony of standard Bible Dictionaries, like the one from which I have just been quoting, ought to be sufficient to decide the questions at issue. In order, however, to leave my opponents no possible room for caviling, I will now prove, by the direct testimony of the Bible itself, the truth of every charge that I have preferred against it.

1. By the following passages I prove that the Bible represents the earth as a *stationary* body, firmly fixed upon *pillars*, or resting upon the *waters* of the great deep, or on other *material* foundations. In these, and all the other passages that I shall quote, the words marked as emphatic are so marked by myself. "For the *pillars* of the *earth* are the Lord's, and he hath set the *world* upon them" (1 Sam. ii, 9). "Where wast thou when I laid the *foundations* of the *earth*? . . . Who hath laid the *measure* thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the *line* upon it? Whereupon are the *foundations* thereof *fastened*? Or who laid the *corner-stone* thereof? (Job xxxviii, 4-6). "Who laid the *foundations* of the *earth* that it should not be *removed* forever?" (Ps. civ, 5). "Which shaketh the *earth* out of her *place*, and the *pillars* thereof tremble" (Job ix, 6). "Mine hand also hath laid the *foundations* of the *earth*" (Is. xlviii, 13). "The *earth* and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved; I bear up the *pillars* of it" (Ps. lxxv, 3). "Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong *foundations* of the *earth*" (Mic. vi, ii). "For the windows from on high are open and the *foundations* of the *earth* do shake. The *earth* shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be *removed* like a *cottage*" (Is. xxiv, 18-20). "The *world* also is *established* that it cannot be *moved*" (Ps. xciii, 1). "And the channels of the sea appeared, the *foundations* of the *world* were discovered" (2 Sam. xxii, 16). "Which . . . layeth the *foundations* of the *earth*" (Zech. xii, 1). "And thou, Lord, in the be-

ginning hast laid the *foundations* of the earth" (Heb. i, 10). "For the earth is the Lord's, . . . he hath *founded* it upon the seas, and *established* it upon the *floods*" (Ps. xxiv, 1, 2). "To him that *stretched* out the earth above the *waters*" (Ps. cxxxvi, 6). Of necessity all these declarations and representations are either true or false. Dare my opponents say that they are all true? If not, dare they say that they are all false? If not, what do they dare say on the subject?

2. By the following passages, I prove that the Bible represents the earth as a *flat* body—as being "*spread forth*," "*stretched out*," etc.; terms that could not be applied to a body of a *spherical* form, such as we now know the earth to be. "Thus saith God the Lord, . . . he that *spread forth* the earth . . ." (Is. xlii, 5). "To him that *stretched out* the earth above the waters" (Ps. cxxxvi, 6). "I am the Lord . . . that *spreadeth abroad* the earth by myself" (Is. xlv, 24). "And thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish; but thou remainest: and they shall wax old as doth a garment. And as a *vesture* shalt thou *fold* them up. . . ." (Heb. i, 10, 12). Do my opponents really believe that the earth ever was, in very fact, thus "*spread forth*," "*stretched out* . . . above the waters," etc.? And do they really believe that it ever will be, in very fact, thus *folded* up like a *vesture*?

3. By the following passages, I prove that the Bible represents the earth as the principal body in the universe; as affording plenty of room for all the heavenly bodies, besides great numbers of heavenly devils, to fall upon; and as being so spread out under these things that they all inevitably strike it, when they do fall. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning" (Is. xiv, 12). "And all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their hosts shall fall down as the leaf falleth off from the

vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree" (Is. xxxiv, 4). "And the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Matt. xxiv, 29). "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters" (Rev. viii, 10). "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth" (Rev. ix, 1), "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke x, 18). "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, . . . he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. xii, 7-9). "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind, . . ." (Rev. vi, 13, 14). To say nothing about the devils, do my opponents truly believe that "the stars of heaven" ever did, or ever will, come rattling down thus upon the earth, like so many figs?

4. By the following passages, I prove that the Bible represents what we call the sky as a *solid* structure or firmament, placed like a vast inverted bowl over the earth. "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament heaven" (Gen. i, 7, 8). "Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is *strong*, and as a *molten looking-glass*?" (Job xxxvii, 18). Are my opponents willing to swear that they do sincerely believe in the existence of any such firmament—of any such strong sky, composed of metal, as were the mirrors or looking-glasses of ancient times?

5. By the following passages, I prove that the Bible has vast bodies of water placed above this firmament, and, consequently, above the sun, the moon, and the stars,

which, as I shall soon prove, were set in the firmament. I also prove that these waters may, at any time, be made to pour down upon the earth, through windows or doors, made for this purpose, in the body of the firmament. "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament heaven" (Gen. i, 7, 8). "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights" (Gen. vii, 11, 12). "The fountains also of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven [not from the clouds] was restrained" (Gen. viii, 2). "Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven" (Ps. lxxviii, 23). Are any of you so completely blinded by priest-craft as to really believe that there actually are any such bodies of water above the sun, the moon, and the stars, and that this water can be made to pour down upon the earth, through any such windows or doors, in any such strong sky or firm heaven?

6. By the following passages, I prove that, in order to keep them from falling, the Bible has the sun, the moon, and the stars, all necessarily at an equal distance from the earth, and a little below the waters of which I have just been speaking, set or stuck, like nails, into this firmament or solid sky. I also prove that this firmament is so violently shaken, sometimes, that the heavenly bodies, and living beings, such as dragons, angels, etc., drop out of it and fall to the earth. "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness" (Gen. i, 16-18). "And

the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs. And the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together" (Rev. vi, 13, 14). ". . . and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Matt. xxiv, 29). Can any really intelligent person truly believe that the heavenly bodies—the untold millions of worlds of the universe, all at an equal distance from the earth, and all a little lower than are the waters which are "above the firmament"—actually are thus stuck like nails into a solid sky, and that they actually can be, and have been, and are yet to be, thus shaken out of it, and made to fall, like figs upon the earth?

7. By the following passages, I prove that, like the pagans of old, the Bible locates the throne of God on the upper or convex surface of this firmament, on the same surface on which are the waters which I have described. I prove, too, that the Bible represents this solid sky or heaven as being always directly above the earth, so that whatever falls from heaven, is bound to strike the earth, and whatever ascends from the earth, to any considerable height, is bound to reach heaven. In proving this, I prove that, of necessity, the earth must remain stationary, directly under this solid heaven, or else that this heaven, with God and all his hosts upon it, is so connected with the earth as to accompany her in all her revolutions. I also prove that the Bible represents this firmament or solid heaven as something capable of standing by itself, after all the heavenly bodies have been shaken out of it; as something capable of taking fire, and being burned up or melted; as being something capable of being rolled together, as a scroll, and taken away. "And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness" (Ex. xxiv, 10). "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone. . . ."

(Ezek. i, 26). "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's temple is in heaven. . ." (Ps. xi, 4). "For as the heaven is high above the earth. . ." (Ps. ciii, 11). "And the great dragon was cast out [of heaven] into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. xii, 9). "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations" (Is. xiv, 12). "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke x, 18). "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth. . . And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together" (Rev. vi, 13, 14). ". . . and the heavens are the works of thine hands. And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed" (Heb. i, 10, 12). "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and . . . wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved; and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii, 10-13). Do you really believe all these things? If you do, then, perhaps, you can tell us whether the earth remains stationary under the solid sky or heaven in question, or whether this heaven, with its God, its angels, its innumerable hosts of saints, its vast bodies of water, its sun, its moon, and its stars, accompany the earth, in all her revolutions. We would be specially pleased to have you inform us whether the sun, in particular, does, or does not, accompany the earth, in all her revolutions around himself.

8. By the following passages, I prove that the Bible represents this solid sky or heaven as having foundations, resting, like the rim or edge of an inverted bowl, upon the earth, or in the waters, upon which the earth herself is represented as being "stretched out." "The pillars of heaven tremble, . . ." (Job xxvi, 11), ". . . "the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was

wroth " (2 Sam. xxii, 8). "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my foot-stool" (Is. lxvi, 1). "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, . . . that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Is. xl, 22). "Who . . . stretchest out the heavens like a curtain. Who layest the beams of his chambers in the waters. He watereth the hills from his chambers" (Ps. civ, 2, 3, 13). As here described, heaven spread out "as a tent to dwell in," corresponds exactly with what we call the sky, as it appears to our unaided vision. Since God was supposed to sit upon the heavens, and since the heavens, thus used by him for a seat, were supposed to rest with their circular edge, like the edge of an inverted bowl, upon the earth, the author very consistently speaks of him as sitting "upon the circle of the earth." As here mentioned, the "circle of the earth" can be nothing else than the visible horizon—the circle formed by the sky where it seems to rest upon the earth. That portion of the circular edge of the sky or heaven, which extended out beyond the land into the waters, was supposed to rest upon beams, or something else more substantial than the water. With this prevailing idea in his mind, therefore, the author very consistently speaks of God as laying "the beams of his chambers in the waters;" and, in view of the supposed presence of vast bodies of water, "above the firmament," right in God's dwelling-place, he also speaks very consistently when he says of God, "He watereth the hills from his chambers." When we consider the true standpoint of opinion occupied by the author when writing these passages, their meaning becomes very plain. But do you really believe that any such solid sky or heaven—any such vast inverted bowl—does actually rest with its circular edge upon the earth, thus forming what the author calls "the circle of the earth," or upon beams laid in the waters?

9. Finally, by the following passages, I prove that the Bible represents day as entirely independent of the sun,

and light as entirely independent of any source, or of any motion. "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night: and the evening and the morning were the first day. . . . And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. . . . And the evening and the morning were the fourth day" (Gen. i, 3-19). From these passages, we learn that the Bible certainly teaches that light existed as a kind of body before there was anything at all to shine, or give forth light; and that day, composed of this body, existed, with its evenings and mornings, during three full days, or, as some theologians have it, during three full geological epochs before there was any sun to produce day. We also learn that the Bible teaches that the sun was finally made, not to produce the light which constituted day, but to divide this already-existing light from the already-existing darkness. "While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened, . . . " (Eccl. xii, 2). Here we certainly have four distinct kinds of luminous bodies: the sun, the light, the moon, and the stars." The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun" (Ps. lxxiv, 16). Here, again, we have light as a distinct body.

I have now fully established the fact that the Bible certainly does teach a great number of very important, and yet demonstrably false doctrines concerning the form, the nature, the position, etc., of the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the waters, and concerning the source or cause of day, the nature and source of light, etc., etc. Were it necessary, I could adduce a great number of additional passages all tending to establish the same fact.

Further proof, however, is surely unnecessary. And now, let me ask, can that book be the inspired word of an all-wise God which teaches so many false, and so few true doctrines, and can the teachings of that book be worthy of the confidence of mankind?

All the passages which I have quoted are either plain statements of what, at the time they were made, were, almost universally, believed to be literal facts, or plain allusions to such supposed facts. As I have already shown, therefore, the writers of these passages could not have intended that their language should be understood in any other than its literal sense. At any rate, it was understood only in its literal sense, by those for whom it was intended, and the authors, although living right among those people, and knowing full well how they understood it, never so much as intimated that they did not understand it in its proper and intended sense. Had they intended that their language should be understood in a figurative sense, they certainly would have managed, in some way, to make it so understood. When, therefore, they asserted that God had set the world upon pillars, or stretched it out upon the waters, and when they asserted that he had made a solid sky or firmament, that he had made day independent of the sun, etc., etc., they evidently asserted either so many actual facts, or so many absolute and inexcusable falsehoods, and we must accept their assertions accordingly.

As I have likewise already shown, the whole Christian Church for more than fifteen centuries, also universally understood these passages to be strictly literal descriptions of real objects, and of actual events; and, so long as they retained the power to do so, they burnt as heretics and infidels, all who dared to teach any doctrine in conflict with the literal teachings of these, and similar passages. After a long and desperate struggle, however, in defense of their flat and stationary earth, their solid sky or firmament, etc., the champions of the Bible were at last com-

pelled to yield to the overwhelming power of the invincible truths of science, and to admit that the earth never was, as taught by the Bible, flat and stationary; that the sky never was a solid blue bowl inverted over the earth; that day never was independent of the sun; that light never was independent of a source, etc. In making these enforced admissions—and this they did with a very poor grace—these champions of the Bible, as a matter of course, virtually confessed that, in regard to all of these things, they had themselves always been the advocates of error, and that, for teaching the truth, they had put to death, by the most horrible of all known tortures, vast numbers of men, wiser, braver, and better than themselves. They never did, however, have the manliness and the honesty to make these humiliating confessions in words, and to put them upon their records.

But what were these intolerant bigots, convicted as they were of error and of murder, to do with the Bible, by the teachings of which alone they had been enabled so long to sustain their many gross errors, and to commit, with impunity, their many horrible murders? In this book, they still found, as clearly taught as ever, the now confessedly erroneous doctrines of a flat and stationary earth, a solid sky, etc.—the pernicious doctrines that had led themselves to commit so many cruel murders upon the advocates of the truths of science. Under such circumstances, honest men would have promptly condemned this book as a pernicious thing—as the most formidable of all obstacles to the advancement of light, knowledge, civil liberty, and true happiness among men. Unfortunately, however, the priesthood of the Christian Church seems never to have been, to any considerable extent, composed of honest and manly men. On the contrary, it seems always to have been composed chiefly of blind and intolerant bigots, or of selfish and time-serving hypocrites. We need not be at all surprised, therefore, that they still retained the Bible, and taught it to the people as the In-

spired Word of God, and as absolutely true, after they themselves very well knew that it was filled with monstrously false and pernicious doctrines. So long as it enabled them, as it did, to keep the people in subjection to themselves, and, without any honest labor on their own part, to live in luxurious ease, they cared precious little what might be the character of its teachings. In order to retain it, however, after the discovery of the fact that nearly all of its teachings were utterly false, and, necessarily, pernicious, they found themselves compelled to make the wonderful discovery that its teachings had never been properly understood, even by its authors themselves; that, when properly understood, its teachings did not, in the least, conflict with the known truths of science; that the very things which they themselves had so often and so clearly proved to be direct and utterly irreconcilable contradictions, and on the strength of which they had committed so many atrocious murders, were, in reality, only so many beautiful harmonies.

In order, however, to make this truly wonderful, and yet absolutely necessary discovery, the champions of the Bible found themselves compelled first to make the equally wonderful discovery that, when speaking of the origin, the form, and the nature, of the earth, the sky, the sun, etc., none of the writers of the Bible ever meant what they said, or said what they meant; that when, for instance, they spoke of a day as being composed of light, as being the opposite of night or darkness, and as having an evening and a morning, they did not mean a day at all, but meant a geological epoch, a quantity of caloric, or some other thing entirely different from that which the language so clearly describes; that, in short, they meant anything and everything, that priests might, in the future, find it necessary to have them mean, in order to make their teachings harmonize with those of science. All these facts are too well known to require any proof. Every person well acquainted with the history of the Christian Church

knows that, until they were compelled to do so, the champions of the Bible never thought of such a thing as giving any other than a strictly literal meaning to any of the passages which I have called in question. It is also a well known fact that, notwithstanding the demonstrated revelations of science to the contrary, a large portion of the entire membership of the Church still hold that the earth is flat and stationary, the sky a solid structure, etc.; and that, to sustain this belief, they still quote, as did the entire Church of old, the plain teachings of the Bible.

Could these protean champions of the Bible have found a single passage, in that book, which really did describe the earth, or clearly refer to it, as a globe revolving in space, would they have ever thought of such a thing as giving to the language of that passage any other than a literal meaning? Would they not, on the contrary, have vauntingly pointed to that passage as the only source whence the world ever could have obtained a knowledge of the true system of the universe? And yet, from the fact that, in their time, such a description of the earth would not have been understood by the people as at all a literally true one, would not the writers of the Bible, if they had given such a description, have been far more likely to mean it as figurative, than they were to so mean the descriptions which they did give and which they knew would be understood in a literal sense? If, then, the extremely vague passage which I have quoted from Job, and which is the only one of the passages in question of which my opponents are now willing to accept a literal rendering, really does refer to what we now know to be the true form and condition of the earth, is not this passage far more likely to have been meant as figurative language than are any of the other passages in question which describe the earth, or clearly refer to it, as a flat body, firmly fixed upon pillars, or spread out, like a vast floating garden, upon the waters?

Besides all these things, every intelligent person knows

that no serious writer or speaker ever degrades his subject by the use of figures far less beautiful, strong, and grand than are the real ideas he intends to convey. Thus a certain writer, wishing to convey the highest possible idea of the real oratorical powers of Pericles, accomplishes his purpose, in an admirable manner, by saying of that great statesman: "He lightened, he thundered, he shook Greece to her center." Here we have strong and beautiful figures correctly used. Such a writer would never attempt to convey a literally correct idea of the great orator in question by likening him to a school-boy saying his piece. So no writer, wishing to convey a literally correct idea of the real magnificence of one of our great ocean steamers, proudly careering over the mighty billows of the great deep, would ever think of such a thing as attempting to accomplish his purpose, by likening the steamer to an old ox-cart splashing through a mud-puddle. And yet, such a figure, in such a case, would not so much degrade the subject, as would the Bible's little one-horse flat earth, propped up on posts, or spread out like a garment upon the waters, if it were used as a figure of the unspeakable grandeur and glory of the universe as it really is. In attempting, as they did, to convey, by means of his works, the highest possible idea of what they understood to be the real glory of the omnipotent himself, would not the serious writers of the Bible, if, for that purpose, they used figures at all, have used the very highest ideas of which they were capable of conceiving? Could they, then, have had any more exalted idea of the universe than that which they have given us in their little flat earth, their solid sky, etc.? Besides this, since, as you all well know, every figurative expression is intended to heighten and to beautify some real meaning, what was the real meaning which the Bible writers intended to heighten and beautify by the figure—if, indeed, it was a figure—of a little flat earth propped up on posts? Will my opponents please give us that real meaning?

I am aware that many of the champions of the Bible attempt to evade some of the difficulties which I have pointed out, by claiming that, as used in the Bible, the word firmament means simple expansion or empty space, and nothing more. In the margin of the Accepted Version, the word expansion is given as the rendering of the Hebrew word *rakia*, which, in the text itself, is rendered firmament. Professing to do so by inspiration of God, the Mormons or Latter Day Saints have in the text itself, replaced the word firmament, with the word expanse. This change of rendering, however, can be of no service to the tottering cause of the champions of the Bible. In the first place, as I have already shown, the Hebrew word *rakia*, as well as the Latin word *firmamentum*, in all cases, involves the idea both of *substance* and of *solidity*. This new rendering, therefore, of this word by the word expanse or expansion, in the sense of space alone, unconnected with the ideas of substance and solidity, is evidently a false rendering. The fact that they resort to such a rendering at all, shows to what desperate straits the champions of the Bible are reduced, in their herculean efforts, not to convey the truth to the people, but to shield the Bible from the insurmountable difficulties to which they perceive that, in the present light of science, it is exposed by a correct rendering of the term in question. Granting them their new rendering of this term, however, let us see how much their cause is benefited thereby.

As I have already shown, the *rakia* or firmament was something which did not *exist* till it was *made*, and the making of which occupied one-sixth of the entire time devoted by God to the work of creation. Space, however, or simple expansion, as I have likewise already shown, from its very nature, must, of necessity, have always existed. It could not have been space, therefore, to the making of which God devoted the entire second day, or second geological epoch of creation. If the *rakia* or firmament was, indeed, nothing but space or simple expansion, then, since

this already existed, before the second day of creation, just as it did afterwards, we have nothing at all created on that day. This hypothesis, then, involves the blasphemy of charging God with having idled away that entire day, and with having then mendaciously claimed that he had spent it in making something which he very well knew that he had never made at all. I defy any escape from this unpleasant conclusion. Besides this, it is also a fact well known to every grammarian, that the words *a* and *the*, being *limiting* particles, cannot be applied to any but *finite* or *limited* objects. Space, therefore, being, of necessity, infinite, evidently cannot, when spoken of in its entirety, admit of either of these particles. The fact, then, that, in the passages in question, these particles are applied to the word firmament, is proof positive that the firmament was a finite or limited object; and that, if it consisted simply of space, it must, of necessity, have been only a limited portion of space, directly above or surrounding the earth. But was this limited portion of space ever absent from infinite space, of which it forms a necessary part? Was it ever absent from existence so as to need to be made on the second day of creation? In what was the earth already existing, if not in this very same portion of space?

“And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters: and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament” (Gen. i, 6, 7). From these passages, we learn that the principal object for which the firmament was created, was to “divide the waters from the waters.” We also learn that, at the very farthest, the firmament extended only from “the waters which were under” it, to “the waters which were above” it. “Very good,” says one of my opponents, “the firmament is simply that portion of space which intervenes between the waters on the face of the earth, and the clouds.” But did not this portion of space have any existence until the second day of

creation? Did God, in very fact, make this portion of space on that day? And how did he manage, without the aid of the sun, which was not yet made, to raise clouds above this space? And where are the sun, the moon, and the stars, all of which, two days later, he set in this same firmament or limited portion of space? "The waters which were above the firmament," were bound to be above the sun, the moon, and the stars, which were not above it, but in it. And are all these heavenly bodies between ourselves and the clouds? They evidently must be, if your idea of the firmament be correct.

Besides all these things, the Bible calls "the firmament heaven," and places God's throne and his permanent dwelling-place in this heaven. And are God's throne and his dwelling-place no farther from the earth than are the clouds? Does God, do the angels, do all the innumerable hosts of "just men made perfect," at a distance of only one or two miles from us, accompany us in all our journeying around the sun? Besides this, we, being in this same limited portion of space, are bound to be in heaven also; in the very same heaven, too, in which God is, and, as we have already seen, at no great distance from him. In a balloon, we could reach him, almost any day. Being already as much in heaven as we ever can be, why need we make so much ado about going there? Why not each borrow a penny trumpet, and go to tooting away, and being like angels?

In addition to all this, the Bible represents the firmament or heaven as something that is capable of growing old, as does a garment, and of being burnt up, or, at least, dissolved by heat; as something, too, that is not only capable of being folded up, like a vesture, or rolled together, like a scroll, and taken away, but that actually is to be thus disposed of, in order to make room for a new heaven that is to take its place. And is simple space or expansion capable of being thus dissolved by heat, and of being thus rolled together and taken away? And is new

space capable of thus taking the place of old and worn-out space thus removed?

As I have already shown, the Bible also teaches that many stars and many devils or rebellious angels have fallen from this firmament or heaven, and have alighted upon the earth; and that all the balance of the stars, like so many figs, are yet to come rattling down in the same manner. In order to thus fall from heaven, it is evidently necessary for the stars and the devils to pass entirely out of heaven. In suffering this fall, however, the stars and the devils do not pass out of space at all. They are just as much in space after the fall as they are before it. Space, then, cannot be the thing from which they fall. Besides this, if we extend the mere space firmament of my opponents only one or two miles from the earth, so as to have the clouds represent "the waters which were above the firmament," we have not room for the sun, the moon, and the stars which were all set "in the firmament." If, on the other hand, we extend this so-called firmament, as we certainly must, to a sufficient distance from the earth to take in all the countless millions of stars—of mighty worlds and systems of worlds of the entire illimitable universe, how are we to provide "the waters which were above the firmament," and hence above the most distant star that is in the firmament? And, when we want a flood, how are we to make these waters, from their infinite distance—from their position entirely above space—pour down, past the sun, the moon, and the stars, upon the earth? And, when we have enough, how are we to stop the balance of these waters from falling? Has your space firmament windows, or, rather, pipes that can be opened and closed at pleasure, extending to the earth, from the very boundaries of space?

Let the firmament be what it may, however, how are my opponents going to find room enough upon the earth for all the stars of the universe to fall upon when, like so many figs, they come rattling down upon her, as the Bible

says they certainly will? We now know that some of the stars are millions of times larger than the earth. What power, then, has the earth to draw millions upon millions of such immense bodies, from infinite distances, to herself, as she would draw loosened figs from the top of a fig-tree? Besides this, we now know that some of the stars are millions of times farther from the earth than are others. The Bible, however, teaches that they are to be all shaken out of the firmament or heaven at once, and all are to strike the earth at the same time. Will my opponents please explain to us how this can be, when some of the stars are so distant that, according to the laws of gravitation, it would require millions of years, if not eternity itself, for them to fall to the earth? From all these things, you must now clearly see that the Bible's *rakia* or firmament was certainly not simple space or expansion. You must now clearly see that it certainly was nothing more nor less than the supposed solid sky or vast inverted blue bowl of the ancient pagans, into the under or concave side of which, all necessarily at an equal distance from the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars were supposed to be set, to keep them from falling, and out of which it was supposed that they could all be shaken at once, and made to strike the earth at the same time. You must now clearly see that it was nothing more nor less than this imaginary blue bowl which, in the opinion of the Bible writers, as well as of the pagans, stood inverted over a flat and stationary earth; which had large bodies of water on its upper surface, and windows or openings in its body or substance, through which this water could be made to pour down upon the earth; which was spread out "as a tent to dwell in," which was capable of growing old, and of being folded up like a garment; which was capable of being burnt up, or dissolved by heat, which was capable of remaining standing alone, after all the hosts of heaven were shaken out of it; which was capable of being rolled together as a scroll and

taken away; and which, finally, was capable of being replaced by a new blue bowl of the same kind. You must now see that, with this idea of the firmament or heaven, and with this alone, all the language of the Bible that bears upon the subject at all, is clear and consistent. When God spoke of the "fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven," he evidently had reference to the open space on the inside of this vast inverted blue bowl. Make the firmament anything else than this, and, as we have already seen, you reduce to absurdity every passage of the Bible that bears upon the subject.

Like the pagans, from whom they seem to have differed very little, if any, in their opinions on these subjects, the writers of the Bible represent the upper surface of this inverted-blue-bowl firmament or heaven as the dwelling-place of a supreme God, and of an immense host of inferior deities or angels. Like the pagans, the Bible writers also represent their imaginary solid sky or heaven as having once been the theater of a terrible civil war, in which the victors tumbled the vanquished down headlong upon the earth. Like the pagans, the Bible writers represent the imaginary God or Ruler of this imaginary heaven as always having, among men, a set of special favorites whom he helps to rob and to butcher other men. Like the pagans, the Bible writers represent this imaginary God as being so remarkably fond of roast meats as to be willing to forgive a certain amount of sins as the price of a certain amount of these favorite articles of food. Like the pagans, the writers of the Bible represent this imaginary God as favoring, among his followers, the practice of slavery, of polygamy, of concubinage, and of almost every other form of licentiousness. Like the pagans, the Bible writers represent this imaginary God as having come down to the earth himself, and, contrary to all our ideas of morality, gotten an unmarried woman with child. Finally, like the pagans, the Bible writers represent this imaginary God as

an absolute and arbitrary despot, utterly opposed to everything of a republican nature.

By the unequivocal testimony of the Bible itself, as read in the present light of science, I have now fully proved that the story of creation is utterly false, and, also, that every idea which we possess of a personal God, a personal devil, a local hell, or a local heaven, is borrowed from the pagans, or is, at least, held in common with them.

When, however, we prove, beyond all possible contradiction, that the story of creation, and many other things found in the Bible, will not bear the test of reason, science, and common sense, the self-constituted champions of this book cry out that it was never intended to teach science; and that its language and its ideas had to be adapted to the comprehension of the ignorant people of the times in which it was written. From this, it appears that the Bible was never intended for any but the ignorant people of the times in which it was written. Why, then, do these same men persist in their attempts to thrust this confessedly unscientific book upon the educated men of the present time, to whose superior intelligence, its language and its ideas were never intended to be adapted? And since the teachings of the Bible are as sadly wanting in reason and common sense as they are in correct scientific information, why do not the champions of this book cry out also that it was never meant to teach either reason or common sense—that its language and its ideas were intended to be adapted to the comprehension of those only who never exercise either reason or common sense? There would be more truth in this cry than there is in the cry they do make in regard to science.

Admitting, however, that the Bible was not intended to teach science, was it, or was it not intended to teach the truth in all that it does teach? If it was not so intended, then, of course, its teachings are totally worthless. If it was so intended, was that intention, or was it not, fully carried out by the writers? If it was not, then, of course,

as before, the teachings of the book are totally worthless. If it was, then, of course, all the teachings of the book are necessarily true—true, too, in the plain literal sense in which they were understood by the people for whom they were written, and to whose uncultivated comprehension they were specially adapted. On this latter hypothesis, which is undeniably the best of which the subject is capable, the earth is certainly flat and stationary, as plainly taught by the Bible, and as understood by those for whom the Bible was intended; the sky is certainly a solid structure; the stars are certainly stuck into this solid structure, to keep them from falling, and they are certainly mere figs when compared in size with the earth; the day certainly is independent of the sun, etc., etc., just as the Bible plainly teaches that they are.

If, however, the Bible was not intended to teach science, why do its champions make so many and so desperate efforts to prove that its teachings entirely harmonize with those of science? And why do they give to certain words meanings which none but scientists understand? Why, for instance, do they contend that the simple word day, as used in the story of creation, means a geological epoch, a quantity of caloric, etc., when they very well know that, even at the present time, the ideas expressed by these words are not understood by those entirely ignorant of science?

Is it true, however, that the Bible was not intended to teach science? In claiming to teach the origin, the process of formation, and the final destiny of the earth, does it not claim to teach geology? In claiming to teach the origin, the size, the nature, the position, and the final destiny of the heavenly bodies, does it not claim to teach astronomy? In claiming to teach the origin, the nature, etc., of plants and animals, does it not claim to teach botany and zoology? In claiming to teach the origin, the nature, and the final destiny of man, does it not claim to teach the highest form of science, anthropology? In

short, what science is there that it does not claim to teach? Take away its scientific teachings, and what becomes of your story of creation, of the fall of man, of the flood, etc.? And what becomes of your religion, founded as it is upon these stories? If, throughout the Bible, the various sciences, upon which it treats, be correctly taught, then the earth is certainly a flat and stationary body, the sky a solid structure, etc. On this hypothesis, Christianity may be, and probably is, a true religion. If, however, on the other hand, the scientific teachings of the Bible be incorrect, if its flat and stationary earth, its solid sky or firmament, etc., be mere myths, then the Christian Religion, founded, as it undeniable is, upon these myths, is bound to be a monstrous imposition. Which horn of this dilemma will my opponents choose?

With these remarks, I close my notice of the general creation. In demonstrating, as I certainly have, that the entire story of this pretended creation is a baseless fabrication, I have also demonstrated that the Bible of which this story forms an essential part, is the work, not of an all-wise God, but of grossly ignorant, if not basely dishonest men.

I will now close my analysis of creation, by noticing specially the creation of the devil, the serpent, and man. In the creation of these three notorious individuals, God seems to have made as great a mistake as he made when he created the earth flat and stationary, the sky solid, the day independent of the sun, light independent of a source, etc. Indeed, what did he do, in the earlier part of his career, but make mistakes?

At what point in the eternal past the devil was made, and of what kind of material he was composed, I do not pretend to know. Indeed, he is not my devil. He constitutes a very valuable item of the stock in trade of our priests. They should be able, therefore, to tell you when he was made, and of what kind of material he is composed. All I need to know is that he derived his existence and

his powers from God, and that he is still completely subject to God's control. That he is thus one of God's creatures, and that he is thus subject to God's control, I suppose my opponents will not attempt to deny. Since, then, no evil effect can possibly result from any other than an evil cause, we are bound to admit that, if the devil be an evil effect, his cause or Creator is bound to be an evil cause. If God created the devil at all, he must, of necessity, have created all the elements, whether good or bad, that enter into this latter individual's composition and character. This same remark is also equally true of the man, the serpent, and every other object.

You object, however, that this view of the matter makes God himself the original source of all evil. It certainly does; and yet, as I shall fully show in a future lecture, this is exactly what the Bible makes him. Indeed, to hold any other view would be to make God the creator of only about one-half of the universe, and to have the balance produced at the manufacturing establishment of his equally powerful creative rival. This dualism or two-God theory has actually been adopted in Persia and many other countries. Even in our own country, it is held, as a fundamental doctrine, by a denomination usually called Two-Seed Baptists. By means of this theory, these dualistic theologians attempt to escape the otherwise unavoidable necessity of making their respective favorite deities the sources of all evil. This theory, however, involves the absurdity of having two Great First Causes, two Supreme Rulers, etc. I do not know, therefore which is in the worse condition, these dualists with their two gods, the one good and the other evil, or you with your one God, a mixture of good and evil.

Of necessity, everything in nature must be either good or evil. Indeed, evil is nothing more nor less than the absence or the opposite of good, just as darkness is the absence or the opposite of light, silence, of sound, etc. It is evident, therefore, that, of necessity, every good must have

its opposite evil. It is equally evident, also, that, in the economy of nature, evil is just as necessary as is good; and that, of necessity, these two principles are very evenly balanced in the universe. When, therefore, you attempt to screen your favorite God from the charge of being the author of all evil, by assuming, as its author, a bad God or devil, you necessarily make this latter personage a Creator, just as necessary to the existence of the universe, and a Ruler, just as necessary to its government, as you make your favorite God himself. You make the two gods absolutely necessary to each other. Neither the one nor the other can possibly work alone.

This, however, is simply the dualism or Buddhism which you so utterly condemn in the Persians, the Hindoos, and others. The only difference between their form of Buddhism and your own is that, by making the bad God self-existent and independent, they do really screen their so-called good God, from the charge of being the author of evil; while, by absurdly making your devil or bad God a created and dependent being, you throw all the responsibility of evil back upon his Creator and Sustainer. In this way, you make your dualism or devil-dodge an utter failure. It does not screen your so-called good God at all, from the charge of being the author of all evil.

When God had the dirt or other material ready, of which to make the devil, he undoubtedly knew just what kind of a creature he wished to make of it; and, when he began to work upon this material, he necessarily either succeeded or failed in making of it such a creature as he undertook to make. If he succeeded, then, of necessity, the devil is just such a being as God made him to be; and any unfavorable criticisms upon the devil's character, are, necessarily, so many blasphemous reflections against God himself, who made that character. If, however, on the other hand, God failed to make of the material in question such a creature as he undertook to make, then, of necessity, on account of his total incompetency, he was a very

unfit person to be meddling with so dangerous material. If, therefore, there be anything wrong in the devil's character, God himself, in any possible view of the case, is bound to be the author of that wrong; and hence you cannot possibly condemn the devil for being what he is, without condemning God for making him what he is.

You object, however, that God did not make the devil evil—that this latter personage became evil after he left God's hands. But could such a change have taken place in the devil, unless, at the time of his creation, the elements of that change had been implanted in him, as a part of his constitution? Was not that change an effect which was bound to have a cause? And, if, as you pretend, this change was an evil effect, was it not bound to have an evil cause? Who, then, or what, was that cause? The devil himself, not having as yet become an evil being, evidently could not have acted as an evil cause upon himself to make himself become evil. Of necessity, the elements of that evil change must have been present either in his own constitution, as he came from the hands of God, or in the external influences which were brought to bear upon him, and which were also of God. In any view of the case, then, was not God himself, of necessity, the evil cause of that evil effect? Could anything different from the devil, just as he now is, have resulted from the particular combination of causes that made him just what he now is? And was not that combination of causes all of God? When making this personage, so obnoxious and yet so profitable to the priests, did God, or did he not, intend to make him a permanently good being? If he did not so intend, was he not woefully wanting in goodness? If he did so intend, and failed only from inability to succeed, was he not woefully wanting in power? In either case, was he not a very unsafe person to be tampering with the materials of which devils are made?

Of necessity, when about to make the devil, God either did, or did not, know just what kind of a character this

proposed new creature would ultimately become. If he did not know this, was he not a very ignorant God, and do you not lie when you teach that he is omniscient? Had so ignorant a God any right to be manufacturing devils, and turning them loose upon us, without knowing what they would become, and how much harm they would do us? If he had been infinite in either goodness or wisdom, would he ever have made any such hurtful and unhappy creatures at all? You know that he would not.

If, however, on the other hand, as you teach, God is omniscient, and foreknows all things—if he foreknew exactly what would be the devil's future character and future career, then the questions naturally arise, how did he come to possess that foreknowledge, and why did he, while in possession of this foreknowledge, make the devil at all? As yet, the devil himself lay scattered around in the form of dirt, or other raw materials. While yet in that form, it was evidently utterly impossible for him to plan for himself any such character, or any such career, as God already foreknew he was to have. And yet, of necessity, that character and that career had to be fore-planned before they could possibly be foreknown. But who, except God himself, had power to fore-plan any such character or any such career? Indeed, who, except God himself, knew that any such personage as the devil was ever to exist at all? Is it not evident, therefore, that, in order to foreknow just what the devil's character and career were to be, it was absolutely necessary for God himself to pre-determine just what they should be? At any rate, the fact that, with the devil's whole future character and future career clearly spread out, as it were, before him, God proceeded to make that personage, is proof positive that he made him expressly for that very character and that very career. Had he made him for any other character, and for any other career, then the devil would never have been and would never have done what God foreknew that he was to be, and was to do. This would have reduced God's supposed fore-

knowledge into extremely poor guessing. Indeed, it is evidently an utter impossibility for God to foreknow a thing as actually existing, in the future, or an event as actually occurring, until he has himself determined, by the exercise of his own almighty power, to render it utterly impossible for that thing not to exist, and for that event not to occur. In other words, he cannot foreknow a thing, as existing in the future, which is never to exist at all; and he alone has power over future things to make them exist, or not exist, at his pleasure. And thus it was with the devil. He had nothing to do with the fixing of his own future character and future career. While he was still a mere pile of dirt, or other raw material, his future character, and future career, were unalterably fixed for him, as inevitable facts, by the Almighty himself. Thus you see that God himself was certainly the deliberate planner and producer of all evil. Thus you see, too, that the devil is nothing more than a mere instrument, which God manufactured to his own liking, and with which he performs his own evil works. Thus you see, finally, that God himself is the greatest devil there is. I defy any escape from these conclusions.

Again, when God had the pile of dirt ready of which to make Adam, Snake & Co., did he, or did he not, foreknow just what would be their respective characters, their respective careers, and their respective final destinies? If he did foreknow all these things, must he not himself have fore-planned them, and made it utterly impossible for them not to be? Could he have foreknown that all these things certainly would be, unless he had unalterably predetermined that they certainly should be? Of necessity, God's perfect foreknowledge of all things must have extended to all the changes that were ever to take place in the characters of these proposed personages, and to all the causes and consequences of these changes. Of equal necessity, it must also have extended to all the sins that were ever to be committed by these personages and by

their descendants. When, therefore, with a full foreknowledge of all these things before him, God proceeded to make these personages, did he not, of necessity, make them specially for these very careers, these very changes, these very sins, etc.; and did he not render it utterly impossible for any of these things to be avoided? He could not possibly have foreknown that all these things certainly were to be, unless some power, capable of controlling all things, had unchangeably determined that they certainly should be. But, in all the universe, there was no such power except God himself. From this it is evident that, if God foreknew all the sins that were ever to be committed, he must himself have predetermined that those very sins should be committed, and must have rendered it utterly impossible for them not to be committed. Here, then, God himself again reduces to the great arch-devil, the fountain of all evil.

If, however, on the other hand, God did not foreknow what were to be the respective characters and careers of Adam Snake & Co., and of their descendants, was he not entirely too ignorant ever to be successful as a Creator? Is it any wonder that all the experiments—they could not be called anything else—that he ever made upon dirt proved utter failures? In any view of the case, is he not, of necessity, either through woful ignorance or deliberate design, the producer of all evil?

Be all this as it may, however, when he saw that the devil had become evil, and that he was plotting the ruin of angels and of men, why did God permit him to accomplish his evil purposes? Had he, or had he not, the will to prevent the accomplishment of those purposes? If he had not the will to prevent their accomplishment, he must, of necessity, have been willing that they should be accomplished. In this case, is he not *particeps criminis* with the devil in all the evil that has ever been done?

If, however, he had the will to prevent the accomplishment of the evil purposes in question, then had he, or had

he not, the power to do so? If he had had the power to prevent their accomplishment, then it is evident that those evil purposes would never have been accomplished at all. But those purposes were accomplished; and this fact proves conclusively that he either willed their accomplishment, or was unable to prevent it. If he willed it, then, as we have just seen, he was certainly *particeps criminis*. If he was unable to prevent it, was he not, and is he not still, a very weak God? Was not the devil then, and is he not still, the more powerful of the two, and is he not master of the situation? Would it not be prudent, then, to cultivate his satanic majesty's favor a little more than we do, and not spend quite so much time and money upon a God who is unable to help either himself or us? The Bible teaches that there was once a war in heaven, and that the devil, with only one man to God's two, came very near winning the victory. Admitting this to be a fact, may there not, some day, be another war in heaven, and may not the devil, who now, according to all orthodox accounts, has ten men to God's one, be the victor? Would it not, at any rate, be prudent to provide against such a contingency?

Again, when God perceived that Adam, Snake & Co. were about to fall into sin, he necessarily either did, or did not, will their fall, and either had, or had not, the power to prevent it. Had he possessed both the will and the power to prevent it, then, of course, it would never have occurred at all. The fact, then, that Adam, Snake, & Co. did fall, is proof positive that he either willed their fall, or was too weak to prevent it. In the former case, what are we to say of his evident want of goodness? In the latter case, what are we to say of his evident want of power? If, as you teach, either from want of goodness or want of power, he utterly failed to preserve good one inexperienced snake, and two simple-minded country people, who were all of his own manufacture, and all directly under his own control, can there be the slightest hope of his ever making

good, and preserving them so, the countless millions of bad snakes and bad men who now demand his attention, and who are all under the devil's control? Even with the aid of a million priests and a hundred million Bibles, is he not daily getting further and further behind with his work? You know that he is. Would it not be better, then, for him to transfer the whole business to his more enterprising and more successful rival, the devil?

By strictly logical arguments, deduced from the testimony of the Bible itself, I have now fully demonstrated that the attributes ascribed to God by his worshipers are totally inconsistent with the known condition of things on earth. If he were infinite in goodness, he could not will the existence of sin and of sorrow. If he were infinite in power, these things could not exist contrary to his will. These things, however, do exist. Of necessity, therefore, he wants either the will or the power to prevent their existence. In either case, he is a total failure. It may be, however, that, in his wonderful goodness, he keeps sin alive for the sole benefit of the priests, and disease alive for the sole benefit of the doctors, whose respective professions would be gone if sin and disease were to cease among men.

I have also proved that your attempt to lay all the responsibility of evil upon the devil, is a vain and absurd subterfuge. Indeed, all of you who possess anything like a fair degree of intelligence know very well that you do not believe in the existence of any such personage as the devil. You know very well that you preach his devilship simply for money, or because you believe that the ignorant can be better controlled by the fear of this bugaboo than by any other means. Admitting, however, that there actually is such a personage, who made him? Who gives him all his power? Who makes and sends him all his recruits? Who keeps him supplied with brimstone? Is he anything more than a mere instrument in God's hands? Can he, or does he, do anything of himself? And does the fact that

God makes use of an instrument in the promotion of evil, render him any the less responsible for that evil? Should I deliberately form an instrument with which to slay my neighbor, and should I actually slay him with that instrument, would anyone think of acquitting me of all guilt, and of condemning the helpless instrument?

The devil, however, does appear to possess wonderful powers. Indeed, God seems to have given to him more power than he retained for his own use. At any rate, in all the games they have hitherto played, the devil has uniformly been the winner; and, in the games they are now playing, he seems, from all orthodox accounts, to be having a wonderful "run of luck."

After they became rivals, God's first move was to make hell, fill it with brimstone, set fire to it, and tumble the devil and all his followers headlong into it. The devil's first move was to get right out again. This, he probably accomplished by dropping through, since hell, as you all know, has no bottom. God's second move was to make himself a man and a woman to serve him. The devil's second move was to thwart this little enterprise by inducing this primitive pair, and nearly all their descendants, to serve himself. After a few more unsuccessful moves, God seems to have pretty nearly given up the struggle. Indeed, for many thousands of years, he seems to have been in the devil's service, doing very little besides making men, for the devil's benefit, and sending them to hell.

I also find that the Bible gives the devil a much better moral character than it gives God. This fact, I will fully prove in a future lecture. Wishing, therefore, to be on the better as well as the stronger side, I have espoused the devil's cause, and have written a little book in defense of his character. No other man ever dared write such a book. By this act, I have come to stand in great favor with his sulphuric majesty, and hence can be of great service to my friends when they arrive in his kingdom. My orthodox friends, in particular, would do well to remember

this fact. According to their own testimony concerning one another, most of them will ultimately land in hell. They will then stand greatly in need of the kind intercession of some one who has a good deal of influence at the brimstone headquarters. Should I not be in, therefore, when they arrive, let them inform the authorities that, on earth, they were warms friends of Col. Kelso. Upon making this announcement, they will be at once treated with the utmost courtesy, and provided for as their wants may demand. Let the priests, in particular, remember these instructions; otherwise, they are almost sure to be assigned to quarters uncomfortably warm.

And now, in conclusion, I challenge any champion of the Bible to fairly meet, and successfully refute a single argument advanced by me in this entire analysis of the story of creation. My opponents should fairly meet my arguments, with better and stronger arguments, and not, as has hitherto been their wont, with persecutions and the calling of opprobrious names. My views are the result of long, honest, and thorough investigation. They are fully sustained by reason, science, and common sense, and no amount of persecution can ever compel me to abandon them.

I am charged with pulling down and not building up. But what is it that I pull down? Truth cannot be pulled down; and error, no matter how old it may be, ought to be pulled down. The noxious weeds of error must be eradicated from the fruitful soil of the human mind, before the beautiful flowers of truth can flourish therein.

It is true that I pull down; but it is not true that I do not also build up. As darkness can be removed only by being driven out with light, so error can be removed only by being driven out with truth. In the place of every error, then, that I pull down, I build up a truth. And, except it be to the priests, is not the truth, that I build up, of more value than the error, that I pull down? When, for instance, by proving him to be a mere priestly invention, I take from you your God, or your devil, I do you a real

service, and you have no right to demand of me a real value equal to the imaginary value which you have hitherto attached to these entirely imaginary possessions.

LECTURE EIGHTH.

THE DELUGE.

NEXT to the creation of the universe itself, the Deluge is, undoubtedly, the most wonderful event of which we have any record. Of necessity, the account of this event, given in the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of Genesis, must be either true or false. If false, then the Bible, of which this false account is an essential part, is bound to be a false book; and the Christian Religion, founded upon this false book, is bound to be a false religion. The story of the deluge, therefore, must be established as strictly true, or else the Christian Religion must stand exposed as a monstrous priestly imposition.

In regard to the time at which the deluge occurred, there is a great difference of opinion among the various chronologists of the Bible. Most of them, however, place it from one thousand four hundred to two thousand years after the creation. For my purpose, it makes very little difference at what time it is assumed to have occurred. I expect to prove that no such deluge ever could, or ever did, occur at any time.

God is said to have brought the deluge upon the earth for the purpose of destroying the human race, whom he had made in his own likeness and image, but whom, to his great chagrin, he found himself totally unable to control. Indeed, it is said that men, originally made of dirt, while under God's own direct management, became so dirty fellows that he bitterly repented ever having made them at all. He therefore determined to destroy them by means

of a general deluge. In order, however, to destroy, in this way, these his own vile images, he found it necessary to destroy also all the beasts, birds, insects, etc., except just enough for each kind to replenish the earth after the subsidence of the deluge. These he preserved alive in a large vessel called the ark. In this same vessel, he also saved eight human beings—eight of those impious wretches whom “it grieved him at his heart” that he had made. In saving these people, he evidently committed a very grave mistake. From this bad seed, he expected a good harvest. As a matter of course, he was disappointed. Since like inevitably produces its like, this bad seed produced a new crop of men who have proved to be just as bad as the old, and who have, so to speak, kept him constantly in hot water. To keep even with them, however, and to solace his soured temper, he devotes a great portion of his time to the work of sending them to hell.

In the seventh chapter of Genesis, we learn that, when Noah and his family, with their wonderful menagerie, were safe on board the ark, and were shut in by God himself, “all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.” We also learn that, for forty days and forty nights, the waters continued to pour down, not from the *clouds*, but from *heaven*, through these *windows*, and to gush up from the great deep, through these fountains. We learn further, that these waters covered “all the high hills that were under the whole heaven,” and rose fifteen cubits above the tops of the highest mountains. We learn, still further, that, for one hundred and fifty days, the waters “prevailed,” or remained stationary, at that immense height. By adding to these one hundred and fifty days, the forty days, during which the waters were accumulating, we have one hundred and ninety days; and this sum, taken from the entire time spent by Noah in the ark, leaves one hundred and seventy days as the time occupied by the waters in subsiding. This result we obtain by reckoning one entire Jewish year of three hundred

and fifty days plus ten days equals three hundred and sixty days as the entire time spent by Noah on board the ark. If, however, you insist upon having a year and ten days, as the year is now estimated, we will add fifteen days to the above amount. This gives us three hundred and seventy-five days as the entire time spent by Noah on board the ark, and one hundred and eighty-five days as the time occupied by the waters in subsiding.

Since the waters covered the tops of the highest mountains, they must, of necessity, have arisen, in an unbroken body, all around the world, to a height of over twenty-nine thousand feet. To attain so vast a height in forty days required a daily rise of seven hundred and twenty-five feet, or over thirty feet to the hour. This would indicate quite a brisk shower. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that the heaviest rainfalls known, in any part of the world, rarely exceed three inches in one day, and that they are then confined to very small portions of the earth's surface. Besides this, the most careful experiments made by some of the ablest scientists of the world demonstrate the fact that, if the entire atmosphere encircling the globe were filled to saturation with moisture, and then were made to yield that moisture, all at one time, the result would be a sheet of water scarce five inches deep all around the world.

It is evident, therefore, that the waters which came from above, on that memorable occasion, did not come from the earth's atmosphere. Indeed, the Bible does not even intimate that those waters fell, in the form of rain, from the clouds. On the contrary, it puts this hypothesis entirely out of the question by declaring that those waters actually fell from "*heaven*," through "*windows*," which were "*opened*" for that purpose, and which were "*stopped*" when enough water had fallen. From this, it is clear that those waters came from those immense reservoirs which, as we have elsewhere seen, were placed, on the second day of creation, "*above the firmament*" or solid

sky, which was called heaven, and into which, to keep them from falling, the sun, the moon, and the stars, were afterwards set. From the fact that, after enough water had been obtained, "the fountains also of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped," we learn that the "great deep" was still unexhausted, and that vast bodies of water, provided for the benefit of the earth, still remained in "heaven," "above the firmament," and, of course, above the sun, the moon, and the stars.

If the author of the language which I have just quoted, did not mean what he said, concerning the fountains of the great deep, . . . and the "windows of heaven," what did he mean? If the deluge itself was a reality, if the waters which composed it were real waters, what could those "fountains" have been but real openings, in the real earth, through which these real waters gushed up from the real "great deep," upon which the earth really was "stretched out?" And what could those "windows of heaven" have been but real openings in the real solid sky or "heaven" that stood, like an inverted bowl, above this real earth thus "stretched out . . . above the waters?" No one pretends that the *clouds* are "*heaven*," or that they have "*windows*" that can be "*opened*," or "*stopped*," at pleasure. It is evident, therefore, that the author meant exactly what he said. It is also evident that what he said was, necessarily, either true or false. If true, then, of necessity, we really do have a solid sky standing above a flat and stationary earth. We really do have vast bodies of water above this solid sky, and, consequently, above the sun, the moon, and the stars, which, to keep them from falling, really are set or stuck, like nails, into this same solid sky. If false, then, of necessity, the Bible is a false book, and Christianity, a monstrous priest-invented imposition.

The ancients, believing in the real existence of a "firmament" or a solid "heaven" standing above the earth, and in the real existence of "windows" in that "heaven," were

accustomed to speak of these things just as literally as we are accustomed to speak of our houses and of their windows. It was undoubtedly in this strictly literal sense that our author wrote. That I am correct in this conclusion, you will plainly perceive by carefully reading what is said of the "firmament" or "heaven," in the first chapter of Genesis, and then what is said in the seventh and eighth chapters, of the opening and the closing of the "windows of heaven." In order, therefore, to retain your deluge, your Bible, your hell, your heaven, your God, your devil, etc., you are bound to retain also your flat and stationary earth, your solid sky or firmament, etc., with which all these things are inseparably connected. You are bound to utterly repudiate the demonstrations of science which, by entirely dissipating your solid sky or firmament, have clearly proved your stories of the creation and of the deluge to be totally false, and have effectually removed the only local heaven—the only celestial dwelling-place of God you ever had, or ever can have.

When we thus perceive how absolutely indispensable to the religion upon which their financial interests depend, is this solid sky—this "firmament" or "heaven" of the Bible—we cease to wonder that the Christian priesthood have always offered the most intensely bitter opposition to every science the teachings of which were calculated to interfere with this firmament or heaven, or with the flat and stationary earth over which it stood. We cease to wonder that they condemned the venerable Galileo to a dungeon, and the brave Bruno to the stake, for teaching sublime truths, which, if generally accepted, were bound to dissipate forever, from the minds of men, this palladium of the priesthood—this imaginary firmament or heaven of the Bible.

Notwithstanding the desperate opposition of the church, however—notwithstanding the loss of the tens of thousands of brave scientists whose voices she has forever silenced in death, the truths of science have at last pre-

vailed, and the firmament of the Bible, the heaven of the Church, has totally vanished from among the things that be. Together with it, have also, of necessity, disappeared the windows which were in it, and the throne of God and the waters which were above it. The sun, the moon, and the stars, too, which, all at an equal distance from the earth, and at very short distances from one another, were set in this firmament, are now left, swinging free in space, at all imaginable distances from the earth, and from one another. Besides this, from being very small objects, all made on the same day, some six thousand years ago, and all destined, at no distant period in the future, to come rattling down, like so many figs, upon the earth, the stars have now become mighty worlds and systems of worlds, many of them millions of times larger than the earth, differing countless millions of years in age, and destined to roll on, in their unspeakable glory, through all the incalculable eons of coming ages.

As a matter of course, this magnificent triumph of the truths of science over the errors of the church is causing the priests a vast amount of trouble and anxiety. In order to retain their influence over the minds and the purses of the people, they must sustain the Bible; and, in order to sustain the Bible, they must find some equivalent substitute for the Bible's vanished firmament or solid sky. The finding of this substitute, however, proves to be a very difficult matter. In any case, they are bound to have large bodies of water, provided for the benefit of the earth, placed above this substitute. They are also bound to have the sun, the moon, and the stars placed in this substitute, and, consequently, between these waters and the earth.

As I have elsewhere said, some of these hard-pressed priests assume that the firmament was, and still is, simply that portion of the atmosphere which intervenes between the earth and the clouds. On this assumption, the clouds are made to represent "the waters which were above the

firmament." But "God called the firmament heaven," and established his throne upon it. And is heaven nothing more than this lower portion of the atmosphere? Is it upon nothing but this that God's throne is established? Is it to nothing but this, that Christians expect to go, when they die? We are in this, already; but are we in heaven? Besides this, what of the sun, the moon, and the stars? "God set them in the firmament;" not beyond it. But did he ever set them in, and not beyond, this lower portion of the atmosphere? In addition to all this, the firmament was not created till the second day, or secondary geological epoch of creation. And was not the lower portion of the atmosphere created till that time? Is not this portion inseparably combined with all the balance of the atmosphere? And must not this portion have been created at the same time with the balance? Could there have been, during a whole day, or a whole geological epoch, a perfect vacuum, all around the world, in the space now occupied by this lower portion of the atmosphere? Finally, it took God an entire day, or geological epoch, to create the firmament. And is it at all reasonable to hold that the making of this portion of the atmosphere required as much time as did the making of the sun, the moon, and the stars? Do you not clearly see that this assumption is totally untenable? Better cling to your old Bible firmament, or solid sky, placed, like an inverted bowl, over a flat and stationary earth. If you make any concessions to the truths of science, your trade or profession, now so lucrative, will soon be utterly destroyed. "A word to the wise," etc.

As I have also said elsewhere, others of our hard-pressed priests assume that, by the word firmament, the writers of the Bible meant nothing more than the illimitable expanse of space that surrounds the earth on all sides. This meaning is given in the margin of the Accepted Version. The Douay or Catholic Bible also gives it in a note; while the Mormons use the word expanse, in the text itself, instead.

of the word firmament. From certain points of view, this assumption, like the one we have just been considering, at firstsight, appears somewhat plausible, and very convenient. It gives God an abundance of room in which to set the sun, the moon, and the stars. For this purpose, it is all that could be desired. But what of the upper waters? They were placed "above the firmament," not in it. Indeed, the firmament was made expressly for the purpose of keeping these waters permanently separated "from the waters which were under the firmament." These upper waters, too, being provided for the sole benefit of the earth, could not have been placed at any very great distance from her. Besides this, they could be made to pour down upon the earth only through openings, in the firmament, called "the windows of heaven." At the pleasure of God, who dwelt up there, these windows could be so "opened" or "stopped" as to give the earth just so much water as he desired her to have. But are there any such bodies of water, provided for the sole benefit of the earth, entirely above or beyond the illimitable expanse of space? And are there any such windows in that expanse?

"And God called the firmament heaven." As we learn from various other passages, some of which I noticed in my last lecture, this heaven rested upon pillars or other substantial foundations; and was itself the firm foundation upon which God erected his throne. But is heaven nothing more than an illimitable expanse of space? Does God's throne rest upon nothing more substantial than this? Does this expanse rest upon pillars or other material foundations? Do Christians expect, at death, to simply go out into an illimitable expanse of space? Are we not already as much in this expanse—in this heaven, if you please, as we ever possibly can be?

Besides all this, the firmament was a *manufactured* object; something that God spent a whole day, or a whole geological epoch, in *making*; something that had no *existence* till it was thus *made*; something, too, that was made

expressly to permanently divide "the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament." Could all this be true of illimitable space or expansion? Is it a manufactured object? Was it made expressly for the purpose of dividing "the waters which were under" it "from the waters which were above" it? Could these two divisions of water have been both entirely outside of space? If not, could the one have been "under" it, and the other "above" it? Could space have been totally absent from the universe—totally non-existent till the secondary period of creation? Could the earth, could God, could anything have existed, without space to exist in? Is not space, from its very nature, utterly incapable of ever having been absent or non-existent? Is it not clear, therefore, that, by the word firmament, the writers of the Bible did not mean mere space or expansion? Is it not clear that they meant precisely what they said, a *rakia* or firmament; something calculated to render firm whatever was established upon it; something capable of sustaining the enormous weight of the vast bodies of water which were placed above it, and of all the heavenly bodies that were set in it; something from which all the stars could be shaken, and made to come rattling down, like so many figs, upon the earth; something, like sheet metal, capable of being melted or "dissolved" by heat; something capable of growing "old as a garment," and of being "rolled together as a scroll" and "taken away?" If, then, there be no such firmament, no such solid structure, resting, like an inverted bowl, over a flat and stationary earth, is not the story of the deluge, as well as that of the creation, proved to be necessarily false? Is not the Bible, also, of which these false stories are essential parts, proved to be, of necessity, a false book? And is not Christianity, founded as it is upon this false book, proved to be, of necessity, a monstrous imposition?

So long as their firmament remained intact, the champions of the Bible derived a great portion of the waters of

the deluge from its inexhaustible stores. Science, however, having effectually dissipated that firmament, with its immense reservoirs of water, and having also established the fact that no considerable portion of the waters of such a deluge could ever have come from the atmosphere, these champions are compelled now to derive those waters almost entirely from that other assumed source of supply, the "fountains of the great deep." For a long time, these fountains afforded all the water that was needed for that wonderful deluge. The Hebrews, like nearly all other nations and tribes of antiquity, believed that the earth was spread out upon the waters of what they called the "great deep." "To him that stretched out the earth above the waters." "For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." These, and many other similar passages, show the ideas entertained of the earth by the writers of the Bible. These writers, therefore, had no difficulty in having water enough for the deluge gush up, through breaks or fountains in the earth, from the "great deep," upon which the earth was thus "stretched out."

Meddlesome infidel science, however, not willing to tolerate error even for the benefit of God's mighty hosts of pampered, bigoted, and worse than useless priests, has again interfered with the means by which these proverbially cunning and selfish gentlemen manage to maintain their wonderful and despotic influence over the minds of the too credulous masses, and to draw their unearned salaries, for which alone they principally labor. This time, science has changed the Bible's little flat and stationary earth, "stretched out above the waters," into the modern astronomer's grand and glorious globe, revolving, with inconceivable velocity, through the trackless regions of unmeasured space. This wonderful triumph of truth has compelled the champions of the Bible to relocate their "great deep;" to remove it from under and around the earth, where the Bible clearly locates it, and to place it in

great cavities inside of the earth. By thus changing the location of their "great deep," these champions directly contradict the plainest teachings of the Bible on this subject. For this, however, we need not blame them very much, since they do not themselves believe the teachings of the Bible which they thus contradict, and since, by this subterfuge, they are enabled a little longer, without honest labor, to obtain the means of living.

The great Commentator, Dr. Clarke, says: "It appears that an immense quantity of water occupied the center of the antediluvian earth; and as this burst forth by the order of God, the circumambient strata must sink in order to fill up the vacuum occasioned by the elevated waters." The learned Doctor does not tell us why "it appears that an immense quantity of water" once thus occupied the center of the earth; nor does he tell us to whom it appears that such was the fact. We know very well, however, that, to no scientist, of the present time, does it appear that the center of the earth was ever thus occupied. We cannot, in all nature, discover the slightest trace of any such former condition. Indeed, nearly all scientists now agree that the earth is of igneous, and not of aqueous formation. Driven to desperation, however, by the developments of science, the champions of the Bible are willing to resort to any assumption whatever, no matter how unscientific and absurd it may be, if it only tends to aid them in their efforts to extricate this monstrous story of the deluge from the extremely grave difficulties with which it is surrounded. To these hard-pressed champions of the Bible, therefore, and to them alone, does it appear that the earth's center was ever filled with water. Could these men, in any other way, find water enough to constitute their deluge, do you suppose that they would ever think of resorting to so unwarrantable an assumption? Is not the making of this assumption clearly an act of desperation? And of what avail can it be to their cause?

To the intense disgust and consternation of the priest-

hood, who make the retailing of theology a very lucrative business, science has now demonstrated the fact that water enough to constitute the deluge in question could no more have been obtained from the interior of the globe, as assumed by Clarke and others, than it could have been, as plainly taught by the Bible, from the upper side of a solid sky, or from the under side of a flat and stationary earth. The subterranean cavities would have had to be immense to furnish a body of water over five and one-half miles deep all around the world, and then have so much still remaining in them that their outlets had to be "stopped," and their further discharge of water thus "restrained." These cavities, must, of necessity, have extended to a depth of many miles from the earth's surface, if not, as assumed by Dr. Clarke, to her very center. It is now a well-known fact, however, that, after an additional cooling of over four thousand years, the internal heat of the earth is so great that, at the comparatively small depth of two miles, water cannot exist. It is evident, therefore, that no such bodies of water as those above assumed ever did exist in the interior of the earth. Indeed, we might just as well contradict the Bible's story of the deluge, in toto, as to contradict that portion of it which relates to the sources whence the waters of that deluge were obtained. "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. i, 2). Here the "deep," or the "great deep," as it is sometimes called, so far from filling the center of the earth, certainly covered her surface. So far from containing the "great deep," in her own center, the earth was herself contained in the "great deep." "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas" (Gen. i, 9, 10). Can any intelligent person believe the "one place," into which all these waters of the

“great deep” were “gathered together,” was the center of the earth? Did not the earth, on the contrary, rise up, like a previously sunken body, and rest upon the surface of the “great deep,” with its waters under her, and all around her edges? Is she not, everywhere in the Bible, represented as occupying this position, and as being sustained in it upon pillars that extend down into the waters of the “great deep?”

Admitting, however, that the subterranean bodies of water, assumed by Dr. Clarke and others, did exist, and that they did “burst forth by the order of God,” what must have been the result? The cavities, from which they came, having been filled with earth, by the sinking of the “circumambient strata,” could not, of course, ever receive back again the waters which they had sent forth. Besides this, the sinking of the “circumambient strata” would evidently leave a depression, on the surface of the earth, just equal to the cavity below, which they had filled by sinking. When expelled from the cavity below, therefore, the waters would simply settle into these external depressions, and would stand at no greater height than had stood the “circumambient strata,” when occupying the same position. The earth and the water would merely have exchanged places. Together, they would still have occupied the same space that they occupied before this exchange took place. The general surface of the earth, therefore, would evidently not have been affected, in the least, by this exchange. No general deluge, then, could have been effected in this way. Only those portions of land which sunk, could have been deluged by this method, and over those portions seas would have remained.

As we have already seen, the waters of the deluge could never have gone back again into the subterranean cavities whence they had come. What, then, became of them, when God wished the deluge to subside? Dr. Clarke does not satisfactorily answer this question. Indeed, he seems to be in a condition similar to that of the

man who drew an elephant in a lottery. He has a monstrous deluge upon his hands, and does not know what to do with it. He says that the air took up, in the form of vapor, all the water that it had contributed to the deluge. The balance of the water, he says, was gradually drawn off into openings, which were made for it, and which now constitute seas and gulfs. He fails to tell us, however, who made these openings, how he made them, when he made them, or where he made them. He also fails to tell us what occupied these openings during the deluge. Of necessity, they must have been occupied, during that time, by something. If with water, how could more water, and especially a body over five and one-half miles deep, and extending over the entire surface of the globe, have been drawn off into them? Which of the seas and gulfs contain the hundredth part of that amount of water? If, during the time in question, those openings were still filled with earth, what became of that earth when it was scooped out? There must have been enough of it to make a stratum five and one-half miles deep over the entire surface of the globe. Where is it now?

Besides all these things, as I have already shown, God collected all the waters which were under the heaven, into one place, and called this general collection of waters by the general name of seas. Since these seas contained all the water there was under the heaven, it must, of necessity, have been from them that all the terrestrial portion of the water of the deluge was derived. But how could the water of these seas have been made to rise, in an unbroken mass, five and one-half miles above their usual level, all over the face of the globe? And since, before the deluge, there were seas enough to contain all the waters there were under the heaven, why did any more seas have to be scooped out, at the close of the deluge? Was there any more water then than there was before?

I am aware that many of the champions of the Bible attempt to evade some of the difficulties which I have

pointed out, by assuming that the deluge was only partial—that it extended only over the small portion of Asia which is supposed to have been, at that time, inhabited. The Bible, however, says: “And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.” Could a partial deluge have accomplished these general results? The Bible also says that “all the high hills, that were under the *whole heaven*, were covered.” Did not the “*whole heaven*,” of necessity, extend over the *whole earth*? If it did, were not “all the high hills” of the whole earth covered, and was not the deluge, of necessity, a general one? The Bible says, further, that “the mountains were covered.” Some of the highest mountains of the world are in the very part of Asia in which this partial deluge is said to have taken place. And could the waters have been so piled up, on a small area of country, as to cover these mountains? Would not these waters have spread out, and found their level around the whole world? And would not this spreading out of the waters have made the deluge a general one? Besides this, the Bible still further says that “the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first days of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen. From this we learn that the waters had to decrease continually, for two and a half months, before the tops of the mountains of Ararat became visible. When we consider the great height of Ararat—15,000 feet—we certainly have indicated here a height of water far too great not to have produced a general deluge. Did not the author of the story, then, certainly mean to teach a general deluge? Do not those persons plainly contradict him who contend that the deluge was only a partial one? Finally, have I not clearly

proved that no such deluge was ever possible, and that, consequently, the whole story is nothing more than a baseless fabrication.

We will now notice the ark. This is said to have been three hundred cubits in length, fifty cubits in width, and thirty cubits in height. Allowing the cubit to have contained twenty-two inches, a little more than has ever been claimed for it, these dimensions give us, in round numbers, as the ark's entire contents, one hundred thousand cubic yards. This result we obtain by assuming that, throughout its entire length, the ark was uniform in both its width and its height. This assumption, however, we cannot reasonably make. To do so would be to give the ark the form of a monstrous goods box—the very worst form it could possibly have. In order to resist the mighty pressure of the turbid waters, into which, with so immense a cargo, it must have been deeply sunk, and the awful buffetings of the unimpeded billows, the general form of its exterior must have been more or less convex. Giving it this form would greatly reduce its containing capacity. Giving the champions of the Bible all they can possibly ask, however, in this case, as we did in the case of the length of the cubit, we will allow that the ark contained one hundred thousand cubic yards.

At the very least, one-fifth of this space would be occupied by the beams, the floor, the partitions, etc., of the ark itself; by the materials of which the stalls, the cages, the feed-boxes, etc., were composed; and by the necessary gangways. This reduces our available space to eighty thousand cubic yards. Into this space, we must crowd two each of every species of insect, reptile, and unclean beast, and seven each of every species of bird and clean beast. For all of these, we must also furnish a sufficient quantity of proper food to last from one to two years. We must also furnish a sufficient quantity of fresh water to last them all a little over one year. And for all these things,

as well as for the vast accumulations of filth, we must find room in the ark.

The ark was three stories high; and, after deducting the space necessarily occupied by the partitions, the gangways, etc., there would remain, as standing-room, on each floor, about four thousand square yards. Of these three stories, each about eighteen feet in height, the first and the second are usually assigned to the beasts and their food; the third, to the birds and the human beings and their food. Where the reptiles and the insects and their food were placed, we are not informed.

There are, undoubtedly, thousands of species of living creatures that are still unknown to the naturalist. Omitting all of these, we will base our calculations upon those species only that are known. Having the number of species, and knowing the number of each species that were taken, we obtain, approximately at least, the entire number that must have been provided for on board the ark. In this way, we obtain at least five thousand beasts, one thousand serpents, crocodiles, etc., ten thousand land snails, forty-three thousand birds, one million five hundred thousand insects. For all of this immense number of living creatures, many of them of monstrous size, and many others entirely invisible to the naked eye, there must, of necessity, have been provided, in the ark, suitable stalls, cells, cages, etc., together with a sufficient quantity of proper nourishment.

Knowing, approximately, the numbers and the kinds of living creatures that must have been taken; knowing, also, the kind and the quantity of food required by each; and knowing, finally, the time that must have elapsed before new crops of food could have grown, after the deluge, we find that the herbivori alone would have required, at the very least, fifty thousand cubic yards of well-pressed hay. This leaves us only thirty thousand cubic yards for all other purposes. In the same way, we find that the carnivori would have required at least thirty thousand

sheep; and that these sheep, before being killed and eaten, would have required at least thirty thousand cubic yards of hay. This hay would fill all the room in the ark not already filled with hay. We also find that there must have been required at least one thousand tons of various kinds of grain and seeds. All of this, each kind being, of necessity, kept in a separate box, must have required a vast amount of store room. Besides all these things, we find that the wants of this entire menagerie would have required at least ten thousand hogsheads of fresh water, and this would have required a vast amount of store room. We find, too, that many beasts, birds, and reptiles feed almost exclusively upon fresh fish. To supply the wants of these, must have involved the necessity of having, on board the ark, immense fish tanks, the water of which must have been frequently changed. We find, also, that many other beasts, birds, etc., feed almost exclusively upon living insects. To supply the wants of these, millions of living insects, of all conceivable kinds, must have been prepared, and furnished with proper food until they were eaten. We find, further, that many other beasts, birds, etc., feed almost exclusively upon fresh fruits; and the wants of these must have involved the necessity of having, on board the ark, immense orchards and fruit gardens. Indeed, we find that almost every tree and plant in existence, in its green state, constitutes the exclusive food of from one to one hundred species of living creatures. In order, therefore, to preserve these creatures, it was absolutely necessary to have growing upon the ark an abundance of all the different kinds of trees, plants, shrubs, etc., of the world. These would have required extensive gardens, orchards, and groves, all well watered, cultivated, and warmed and lighted by the sun. Some of these trees, plants, etc., could grow only on low and marshy ground; others only on high and rocky ground; others still, only on loose and sandy ground. Besides this, some would require an arctic, some a temperate, and some a tropical

climate. All the different varieties, both of soil and of climate, must have been present in the ark. Indeed, the living creatures themselves would have required all these varieties of climate, if not of soil. Those from the polar regions would have required vast stores of ice to keep them cool. Those from the tropics would have required an increase of heat to keep them warm. But how could all these things have been provided upon the ark, already filled with the single article of hay? And where could room have possibly been found for the almost countless numbers of living creatures, and for the ten thousand tons or more of filth that must finally have accumulated? Besides all these things, it is a well-known fact, that many kinds of insects, such as bees and ants, can live only in colonies. How, then, for instance, did Noah's single pair of bees survive and multiply?

When all things were ready, God himself removed the ark's staging, and closed the great outer door. Then, at once, all within the ark was enwrapped in impenetrable darkness. It is true that, in the top of the ark, there was one window twenty-two inches square. This extremely small window, however, does not appear to have been opened till after the expiration of several months. Indeed, it could not have been opened until after the expiration of the forty days during which the waters "from heaven" were pouring down in torrents so terrific that the ark would have been filled with water had that window been left open. In fact, that window seems to have been intended simply as a place from which Noah could occasionally look out, and not as a means of either lighting or ventilating the interior of the ark. After it was opened, it could have lighted and ventilated only a very small portion of the upper part of the ark. All the other portions must, of necessity, have remained, during the whole year, in total darkness. How could plants and animals have lived so long without a ray of light, and how could Noah and

his family have managed to go about and feed and clean after so many ravenous beasts, venomous reptiles, etc.?

Besides this, since the entire ark was pitched, within and without, to make it perfectly tight, there could have been no possible avenue either for the entrance of fresh air, or for the escape of the foul and deadly fumes which, in a few hours, must, of necessity, have filled the entire interior of the ark. Only the most hardy animals could have survived, for even one day, the indescribable horrors of so hideous and so deadly a den. How, then, could the most delicate creatures have all survived, without the loss of one, during an entire year, in the horrors of such a hell?

I am aware that certain champions of the Bible attempt to evade these difficulties by assuming that, "all out of nothing," God made both light and fresh air in the ark, or else miraculously so modified the natures of the living creatures, that, for an entire year, they were enabled to live without either light or fresh air. This assumption, however, is utterly unwarrantable, and hence, as an argument, totally worthless. Had so remarkable a miracle been performed, it would certainly have been noticed in the Bible. As it is, however, the Bible does not even intimate that there was anything of a miraculous nature connected with any part of the deluge; and these men have no right to assume miracles when the Bible does not claim them. They might just as well assume that God so modified the natures of all those creatures that, for an entire year, they were enabled to live under water. Indeed, to have enabled them to live a year under water, would have required no greater miracle than would have been required to enable them to live, for the same length of time, without light or fresh air, in that ark. Since we must assume something contrary to the plain teachings of the Bible, why not, therefore, assume that God did preserve all those creatures alive under water? By this assumption, without requiring God to perform any greater miracle, we escape

all the difficulties connected with the ark method of saving them.

Of the eight persons on board the ark, each one must have had to feed, water, and clean after at least six hundred and twenty-five beasts, one hundred and twenty-five reptiles, one thousand two hundred and fifty land snails, five thousand three hundred and seventy-five birds, and one hundred and eighty-seven thousand five hundred insects, to say nothing of the thirty thousand sheep, or their equivalent, and the millions of insects which must have been provided as food for other creatures, and which, until eaten, must have also required food and attention. All this work, too, had to be performed in total darkness, or by torch-light, and amid the most horribly offensive and deadly gases. To anyone who dares reason upon anything connected with the Bible, it must be evident that no eight persons ever could, or ever did, perform all the labor necessarily connected with so monstrous a menagerie. Indeed, I believe that every person who has ever had the care of a large number of different kinds of beasts, birds, insects, and reptiles, will agree that I am not at all extravagant in my estimate, when I say that the proper care of so prodigious, and so diversified a collection, would have required the services of eight hundred, instead of only eight, persons.

In our estimate, we have omitted many species of water fowls, and other aquatic creatures, which, perhaps, might have survived, for a short time, either swimming upon the surface of the water, or resting upon masses of drift-wood. All these creatures, however, would soon have perished for want of fresh water to drink. The salt water of the whole world, being intermingled with the fresh, must have rendered the entire mass totally unfit for drinking. No water-drinking animal, therefore, even though its home be in the sea, could ever have survived such a deluge. Even the fishes would generally have perished. By their saltness, the mixed waters would have

destroyed most of the fresh-water fishes; and, by their freshness, would have destroyed most of the salt-water fishes. Besides this, the oysters and other shell-fish that live only in comparatively shallow waters, would have perished at once when placed, as they must have been, at a depth of several miles.

All the trees, and almost everything else belonging to the vegetable kingdom, submerged, for a year, in brackish waters, must, inevitably, have perished; and many months, and, in some cases, many years, must have elapsed, after the subsidence of the deluge, before new crops of the various grains, grasses, fruits, etc., could have been produced from the seed. How, then, did Noah and his wonderful menagerie manage to subsist while the new crops were growing? How did the carnivori, in particular, manage to subsist? Could these ravenous creatures have obtained even one "good square meal," until time for increase had been given to those beasts, birds, etc., upon which they were wont to feed?

Besides all these utterly insurmountable difficulties, how were these various living creatures, and the appropriate food for each kind, brought together into the ark? In regard to this matter, there are only three possible hypotheses. The first of these is, that the various kinds of beasts, birds, etc., being inspired of God so to do, of their own accord, came together, all at the right time, and entered the ark; each one, by inspiration, knowing, and entering into, the very stall, cage, or cell that had been prepared for it. The second is, that all these creatures were captured and brought into the ark by Noah himself, or by men in his employ. The third is, that they were all miraculously carried to the ark, through the air, by God himself or his angels. The correctness of both the first and the second of these hypotheses can be established by the Bible. We will briefly examine all three of them.

In Gen. vi, 20, we read: "Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the

earth after his kind; two of every sort shall *come* unto thee, to keep them alive." Also in Gen. vii, 7-9, we read: "And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of everything that creepeth upon the earth, there *went* in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah." From these passages, it is evident that just two, a male and a female, of every species of animals, being, of course, inspired of God so to do, *came* of *themselves* "unto Noah," that he might "keep them alive," and, of themselves, "went in unto" him "into the ark," where he already was, at the time of their arrival. Had God intended that they should be *captured* and *brought* together, he certainly would not have said of them that they shall "*come* unto thee, to keep them alive." So also, if they had been taken by force into the ark, it certainly could not have been said of them that they "*went* in unto Noah into ark." But how did they manage, of themselves, all at the right time, to reach the ark?

It is a well-known fact, that, of all animals, nearly every species is confined to some particular region or locality. It is also a well-known fact that, in a vast number of instances, the essential food of an animal is confined to the same locality in which the animal itself is found. Indeed, almost every islet of the sea, and almost every square mile of the land surface of the earth, is known to have some kind of animal, and some kind of food, not found anywhere else. In order, therefore, to reach the ark, many of those animals must have traveled from the opposite side of the earth, twelve thousand miles or more, and from beyond the oceans. The question, then, naturally arises, how did they manage to perform this journey? Did they wade, swim, or ferry the oceans? Of necessity, all that could not fly must have crossed them in one of these three ways. What did they do for food on

their way to the ark, and on their return journey, after the subsidence of the deluge? And how did Noah manage to prepare sustenance, on board the ark, for those animals whose food was to be found only in the distant, and often inaccessible, regions whence they themselves had come? For instance, there are several species of land snails found only in the vicinity of Cape Horn. How did these manage to reach the ark; and to reach it, too, at the very moment they were wanted? Did they, both in going and returning, cross the ocean in any of the three ways above mentioned? If not, must they not, of necessity, have traveled, on foot, throughout the entire length of the American Continent, crossed Behring's Strait on the ice, and then made their way down, throughout the greatest length of Asia, crossing vast deserts, and wading, swimming, or ferrying a thousand streams that lay in their route? At their rate of travel, would not such a journey, over fifteen thousand miles, have required at least ten thousand years? Would they not, therefore, have had to start over eight thousand years before the creation? And would they not now, on their return journey, be still a six thousand years' walk from their old home? So, also, the sloths of South America, to reach the ark in the same way, would have required several centuries. Besides this, since neither the snails nor the sloths could have found food on any considerable portion of their route, it is evident that, of necessity, they must have fasted during nearly the whole of the round trip. In their journeyings to and from the ark, similar insurmountable difficulties would have attended the greater portion of all the other animals. The famous menagerie, therefore, of the firm of Noah & Sons, could not possibly have been a *self-collected* assemblage. We are bound, therefore, to resort to one or the other of the only two remaining possible hypotheses on which that collection could have been made. In other words, we must either have Noah *capture* all the animals, and, by force, bring them into the ark, or else have them

miraculously brought thither, through the air, by *God himself*, or his *angels*.

In Gen. vi, 19-21, we read: "And of every living thing, of all flesh, two of every sort, shalt thou *bring* into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. And *take* thou unto thee of all the food that is eaten; and thou shalt *gather* it to thee; and it shall be food for thee, and for them." In Gen. vii, 2, 3, we also read: "Of every clean beast thou shalt *take* to thee by sevens, the male and his female; and of beasts that are not clean by twos, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth." As the passages which I previously quoted clearly prove that, of their *own accord*, the animals all *came* together, and voluntarily "*went* in two and two unto Noah into the ark," so these latter passages, just as clearly, prove that they did nothing of the kind; that Noah had to "*take*" or *capture* them, and "*bring*" them "into the ark," just as he had to "*take*" and "*bring* into the ark . . . of all food that is eaten." Indeed, a great portion of this food consisted of living creatures. But how did Noah manage to do all of this? And why was he required to take in all the fowls and all the clean beasts by "*sevens*," when, in the passages previously quoted, these creatures, like all the others, were to come in only by "*twos*?"

From the fact that God wished to "keep seed alive upon the face of *all* the earth," it is evident that, at the time he expressed this wish, there was seed actually living "upon the face of *all* the earth." Had any portions of the earth been destitute of seed, he could not possibly have "*kept*" or *continued* seed alive in those portions. In order, therefore, to "*take*" or capture, and to "*bring* into the ark," some of every species of this seed, as well as some of "all food that is eaten," Noah must, of necessity, have gone, or sent, to every portion of "the face of all the earth." If God did not intend that Noah actually should

“take of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort . . . to keep seed alive on *all* the earth,” why did he command him to do this? Why did he so carefully specify “the face of *all* the earth,” if he meant only a small portion of it? And if he meant, as he formerly declared that he did, for the animals to come into the ark, of their *own accord*, why did he so strictly command Noah to “*take*” them, to *count* them, and to *examine* their *sex*, so as to have the right number of every species, and of each sex? If, of their own accord, the animals had come together and entered the ark, the right number of every species, and of each sex, would, undoubtedly, have presented themselves. They certainly neither could, nor would, have all assembled thus, at one time, and in one place, without being inspired of God to do so; and we cannot conceive that he would thus have inspired either a greater or a less number, of every species and each sex, than were necessary. So, if God himself had miraculously brought them together, through the air, he would, undoubtedly, have brought the right number of every species, and of each sex. In neither of these cases would Noah have had to “take” them, count them, examine their sex, and “bring” them “into the ark.” It is evident, therefore, that Noah himself took them, from the places in which they were severally to be found, and brought them, *nolens volens*, into the ark, or had all this done by his agents. It is equally evident, also, that he took of “all food that is eaten”—much of it consisting of living creatures of various kinds—from the various places in which it was to be found, “upon the face of all the earth,” and brought it into the ark.

In order, however, to make this prodigious collection of animals and food, or even to prepare the ark for their reception, it was absolutely necessary that Noah should be thoroughly acquainted with the name, the size, the shape, the habits, etc., of every species of birds, beasts, reptiles, and insects. It was absolutely necessary, too,

that he should know precisely where to find each living creature, how to capture it, what kind and what quantity of food to prepare for it, and at what temperature to keep the air around it. It was also equally necessary that he should know the name, the place of growth, the nature, and the proper mode of preserving every plant that grew "upon the face of *all* the earth." Had he not possessed this thorough knowledge of everything upon every square yard of "the face of *all* the earth," many species of plants, or of animals, would have been either overlooked or improperly treated, and thus lost. In addition to all this knowledge, he must, also, of necessity, have been thoroughly acquainted with all that pertains to navigation; and must, moreover, have possessed microscopes of wonderful magnifying power, with which to determine the sex, etc., of the myriads of animalculæ that are utterly invisible to the naked eye.

It was utterly impossible, however, for Noah, while superintending the building of the ark, to visit, in person, every square yard of "the face of *all* the earth," and bring thence the animals and the plants to be found thereon. Of necessity, therefore, he must have sent out, both by sea and by land, thousands of large parties of men, each under the command of brave and faithful officers, who were well provided with powerful microscopes and a thousand other necessary instruments, and who were all as thoroughly acquainted as was he himself with the sciences of Zoology, Botany, Chemistry, Geography, Navigation, etc. But could all the men of the world, if sent out for that purpose, have been able, even with all their microscopes and other instruments, to discover, to capture, and to bring into the ark, the required number of each sex of every species of animals? Even if the required number of each sex and of every species had been discovered and captured, how many of them would have reached the ark alive? And of those that reached the ark alive, how many would have come forth alive, after a year's confinement in the

unspeakably horrid hell of its rayless darkness, and its deadly gases? Finally, of those that might have survived even this terrific ordeal, how many would ever have been able to again reach their old homes, in which alone many of them were capable of living? What would they have done for food, on their home journey, and how would they have crossed the oceans? Whatever may have been the case, before the deluge, after its subsidence, there certainly could have been neither ships nor men to carry these poor creatures back to the countries whence they had severally come.

To have collected such a menagerie as the one in question would have required more ships, sailors, scientific men, and money than ever existed in the world at any one time. It would also have required more perfect instruments than have ever yet been invented, and a higher degree of knowledge than has ever yet been attained. Besides all this, had there been any such ships, would not many of the sailors have escaped upon them? With all these absolutely insurmountable difficulties before us, does it not become certain that no such menagerie was ever collected by human means?

Seeing, as we now do, that the animals in question could never have come together of their *own accord*, as one of the authors of Genesis plainly teaches that they did, and that they could never have been *captured* and *brought* together by Noah, as another author plainly teaches that they were, we are forced to renounce both of these Bible methods, and resort to the only remaining possible hypothesis, which is, that they were miraculously brought together, through the air, by *God himself*, or his *angels*.

Although this last hypothesis derives very little, if any, support from the Bible, yet, because it is so exceedingly convenient, it is very popular with the champions of that book. It renders perfectly easy the accomplishment of the whole prodigious enterprise in question. These champions have only to assert—and this they are very

fond of doing—that “with God all things are possible;” and lo! the whole thing is done! To comprehend it all perfectly, they have merely to indefinitely stretch their elastic imaginations. They have only to fancy that they see countless legions of angels, with wings like the wings of geese, flapping about on every square rod of the earth’s surface, gathering food and catching animals. They have only to fancy that they see these angels—

“Climbing trees to hunt for bugs,
Lifting stones to gather slugs,
Or probing hollow logs to scare
And rouse the vermin hiding there.”

They have only to fancy that—

“The sky around that wondrous ark,
For seven days was densely dark,
With angels bringing in their store,
Or else departing after more.”

They have only to fancy that they see, pouring down from the blackened sky, a fearfully sublime hail-storm of—

“Lions, tigers, apes, and asses,
Bags of corn, and bales of grasses;
Elephants, rhinoceroses,
Bisons, hippotamuses,
And legions more great ugly cusses.”

Yes, this is, undoubtedly, the very way in which that wonderful menagerie was collected. No wonder that the champions of the Bible are delighted with it! The whole thing is accomplished by the imagination alone.

Has it, however, never struck you as an unaccountable fact that, on seeing this terrific hail-storm of beasts, birds, reptiles, etc., Noah’s ungodly neighbors did not exhibit the slightest surprise, alarm, or curiosity? According to the Bible account, those ancient sinners seemed to regard the whole matter as a very common-place affair. At any rate, so far from being at all disturbed at the sight of these wonderful phenomena, they very unconcernedly went right on

“eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,” and seeing a jolly good time generally. Is not this a very strange fact?

According to the Bible account, Noah had been one hundred and twenty years building the ark. This was built at a great distance inland, and was, by far, the most stupendous structure that had ever been erected. It was in the heart of a densely populated country. Thousands of the people would have seen it, and all of them would have heard of it, and of the object for which it was being built. They would, undoubtedly, have been often warned, too, of their impending destruction. They would have known the very day on which, according to prediction, this fearful catastrophe was to begin. When, therefore, on that very day, they beheld a vast cataract of beasts, birds, reptiles, etc., pouring down out of the air, and, of their own accord, entering into the ark, would those people, hardened sinners though they may have been, have regarded these things with total indifference? Would they have kept right on, as the Bible says they did, “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,” until they were actually swept away by the waters of the deluge? Was not human nature the same then that it is now? And would people now, if similarly situated, act in any such way? When those men perceived that the long-predicted deluge was actually coming upon them, would they have made no effort to save themselves and their families? Would not many of them have entered the ark, driven out most of Noah’s menagerie, and saved themselves? What would we do under similar circumstances?

As I have already stated, the deluge is said to have been brought upon the world for the express purpose of destroying the human race, who, though made—and made “very good,” too—in God’s own image, and trained up under his own direct control, had, nevertheless, become a set of so unruly rascals that, to his great chagrin, he found himself totally unable any longer to manage them. Indeed,

having been originally made of dirt, they very naturally became, under God's own direct training, so dirty a set of fellows that "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." What could be more unutterably sad than is this despairing confession, on God's part, of his own wretched failure? When God became fully convinced that he had committed an irreparable mistake in making these dirt, or, rather, these dirty fellows, he incontinently condemned them all to death, with the exception of one extremely dirty fellow, called Noah, and his family. The saving of this dirty fellow for seed ultimately proved to be as great a mistake as was the making of that original dirty fellow, called Adam. Indeed, from beginning to end, this whole affair seems to have been a dirty business.

After condemning the human race to death for being just what he himself had made them, God very graciously gave them a respite of one hundred and twenty years. Even this apparently merciful act, however, proved also to be, like all God's other acts, a great mistake. Of course, it permitted nearly all of those whose sins had offended God to die peacefully in their beds, and left the penalty of death to fall upon those who, at the time the sentence was passed, were still unborn, and who, consequently, could not have been guilty of any offense at all. In thus condemning to death, as criminals, innocent babes as yet unborn, God was, undeniably, guilty of an act of horrible cruelty and injustice.

In defense of God's act on this occasion, it has been urged that he condemned to death the unborn generations in question, on account of the offenses of which he foresaw that they were to be guilty after they were born. But, without having, at the time, a complete plan of the future, spread out before him, how could he have possibly foreseen who were to be born, in the future, and of what offenses they were to be guilty? And who, besides himself, could have projected or pre-formed such a plan?

Was not he himself, of necessity, the sole creator and controller of destiny, and of all things contained therein? Had he already stepped "down and out," and turned over to another the business of planning and controlling the future? If not, and if he actually did foresee that certain persons were to be born in the future, and that they were to be guilty of certain offenses, must not he himself have been, of necessity, the planner and the predestinator of both the existence and the offenses of those persons? If, in his omnipotence, he had predetermined that none but good and virtuous men should exist in the future, could he have possibly foreseen the existence or the offenses of any others? And could any others have possibly existed at all?

Before God could possibly have foreseen the wickedness of the unborn generations in question, that wickedness must, of necessity, have been predetermined or fixed, in the future, as an unalterable fact. If, then, he did not himself predetermine that wickedness, and make it utterly unavoidable, who did do this, and who made known to him this predetermination? Who, besides himself, had the power to thus fix, as unalterable facts in the future, matters of so vast importance? Admitting, however, that some other party did plan and predetermine both the existence and the offenses of the parties in question, had God, or had he not, the power to prevent the accomplishment of that wicked predetermination? If he had the power, he certainly did not use it, since the predetermination was accomplished? In this case, was he not *particeps criminis* with the author of that predetermination? If he had not the power, was he not a God of most pitiable weakness? Was he not, in power, by far the inferior of the author of that predetermination? If he was unable to protect the persons in question from that stronger party, can he be able to protect us from that same party? Under the circumstances, would it not be well to secure the favor of that other party? In any view of the case, had

the unfortunate persons in question any power to avoid either the existence or the wickedness which, long before themselves were born, were thus fixed, as utterly unalterable facts, upon them? Was it not horribly cruel and unjust, then, in God, to doom these poor people to die as criminals for being that which he very well knew they had no power to avoid being, and which he himself lacked either the will or the power to prevent them from being?

The champions of the Bible declare that God did possess all power; and that, had he so willed, he could have made all men perfectly good, and perfectly happy. They declare, however, that, to have made men thus would not have been in accordance with his plan. They thus fully admit that he was himself the planner of the future, and that the wickedness and the misery of men, and not their righteousness and their happiness, were in accordance with that plan. They declare, too, that, if he so willed, he could, now, in an instant, banish from the earth every vestige of evil; that he could make all men perfectly good and happy; that he could save them all from hell, and make them all partakers of the unimaginable joys—the never-fading glories of his own bright and blissful abode. When, however, we ask, “Why the devil, then, does he not do this?” the reply is, that to do so would not be in accordance with his plan—his plan of salvation, as it is now, strangely enough, generally called. But what kind of a plan of salvation is that with which the universal righteousness of men on earth, and their universal salvation in heaven, are thus not in accordance? What kind of a plan of salvation is that of which Jesus himself said: “For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: [Why so many?] because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it?” Who planned and constructed these two gates, and these two ways? What kind of a plan of salvation is that which thus renders possible an escape

“unto life,” to only a “few” of the human race, and which thus dooms the “many” to unavoidable and eternal “destruction,” in the never-dying flames of hell?

Does not this plan propose to accomplish tenfold more damnation than salvation? Is it, then, a plan of salvation at all, and is its author a Savior? Is it not rather a plan of damnation or destruction, and is not its author rather a Damner or Destroyer? Would you call that invention a life-preserver which is, designedly, so planned and constructed as to insure the destruction of nine-tenths or more of all those who use it? Would you not rather call it an infernal machine? And is that priestly invention, called God’s plan of salvation, any better than would be such an infernal machine?

Even if we leave entirely out of our account all its possible influences upon our extremely problematical existence, as conscious beings, after death, what are the principal results of this absurdly so-called plan of salvation? Did it not, as an absolutely necessary condition of its origin, require the deliberate and the horribly cruel murder of the innocent and the well-meaning, but the strangely fanatical, Jesus? If he had not been thus murdered, could this plan have ever been put in operation? If not, do we not owe the plan itself to the devil, the traitor, and the band of murderers who so graciously accomplished that murder? Has not this plan been, by far, the most fruitful of all the causes of dissensions among individuals, and among nations? Has it not produced more wars, and far bloodier ones, than have all other causes put together? Has it not led to more ignorance, superstition, and crime, and to the invention and the use of far more numerous and horrible instruments of torture, than have all other influences combined? Did not Jesus himself, the putative son of its projector, declare that he “came not to send peace on earth but a sword?” And does not the whole history of the last eighteen centuries fully prove that he was wonderfully successful in sending “a sword,” with all

of its attendant evils, upon the earth? Did he not also declare that he had “come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law?” Did he not further declare that, as a legitimate and inevitable result of this plan, “a man’s foes shall be they of his own household?” And has not this part of the plan been also fearfully successful? Has it not, both in families and in communities, produced more dissensions, and fiercer ones, than has any other one cause? And can the instrument of so much evil be properly called a plan of salvation? Did not Jesus utterly deny his own parents, and did he not, as a part of this plan, require his followers to act in the same unnatural manner toward their parents? Did he not even forbid his followers to bury their deceased parents? Did he not require every one of his followers to “hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters?” Did he not, both by precept and example, teach his followers to abandon all forms of industry, and to live the lives of vagrants? And what but the crushing out from the souls of men all the nobler sentiments of humanity can result from a plan that thus requires us to trample under foot all the sacred ties that bind us to our parents, our brothers, our sisters, our wives, and our children, and to become idlers and vagrants, taking “no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?” Was it not the success of this so-called plan of salvation that plunged the world into the frightful mental and moral gloom of the Dark Ages? And would not a repetition of that success necessarily result in a repetition of that frightful darkness? Does not the same cause, of necessity, always produce the same effect?

Even in its present hopelessly crippled condition, what are still the legitimate workings of this so-called plan of salvation? Does it not, under one pretense or another, rob the poor, overworked, overtaxed, over-credulous, and

priest-ridden people of incalculable sums of money to be squandered in the erection and the furnishing of those innumerable resorts of fashion, pomp, and pride—those gorgeous and costly structures called churches, cathedrals, etc., which are built, ostensibly, for God's use, but which he never needs and never enters? Does it not, under similar pretenses, rob the same people of still greater sums of money to be worse than squandered in the keeping up of immense armies of bigoted, intolerant, selfish, cunning, and often licentious priests, monks, friars, preachers, etc., whose principal business seems to be to prove one another liars, heretics, impostors, imps of the devil, etc.? Does it not still keep up interminable, and exceedingly bitter dissensions in families, in communities, and among nations? Is it not, to-day, causing the rivers of some of the fairest lands of earth to run red with human blood? Is it not to-day, according to your own teachings, still peopling, by wholesale, those horrid regions of utter despair, those bottomless pits of unspeakable torments, those frightfully dark, and yet fearfully fiery caverns of your never-ending hell? Take away all of these grand results, and what would this so-called plan of salvation be accomplishing?

Continue, if you will, as heretofore, to apply to me a thousand opprobrious epithets; continue, if you will, to curse and to persecute me to the full satisfaction of your bigoted and intolerant hearts; continue, if you will, to rob my life of all you can of its sunlight and its gladness; continue, if you will, to hurry me on all you can toward the rayless darkness, the echoless silence, of the approaching tomb; and yet you can never make me regard with any other feelings than those of the most utter abhorrence this abominable plan of so-called salvation. You can never make me regard, with any other feelings than those of the most unspeakable detestation, the heartless bungler, whether he were a God, a man, or a devil, who invented it, and put it into operation.

If nine-tenths of my loved ones are destined to go to hell, as they must be according to the workings of this so-called plan of salvation, I beg leave to go there, too. I am as capable of bearing the horrid flames of hell as are my children and other loved ones who may be predestinated to suffer forever their unspeakable torments. Indeed, I think that, under the circumstances, I would be less wretched there than I would be anywhere else. Whatever my surroundings might be in heaven, I could not endure them. I would be continually tormented with the unutterably agonizing thought that, through God's abominable plan of so-called salvation, my poor, dear children and other loved ones were in hell, writhing and shrieking, with never a moment's rest, in the midst of the awful flames—the quenchless fires of that unutterably horrid region of eternal despair. In fancy, I would behold their flaming eyes, and hear their fearful, their never-ceasing, cries of utterly unspeakable anguish. In fancy, I would behold my children's poor withered hands, extended imploringly toward me, from the midst of the fearful flames writhing around them, and hear their dear, their well-remembered voices, crying, "*O father! father! father!*" These awful visions would be constantly before my eyes, these fearful cries constantly ringing in my ears. How, then, could I endure heaven? How could I bear the constant sight of the deliberate Author of all this uncalled-for woe? How could I bear to gaze on him perched upon a throne, in the center of heaven's public square, surrounded by the "few" who have found the "strait gate," and the "narrow way;" whom, however, it seems he dare not trust, even for a moment, out of his own sight, and whom he keeps constantly shouting, "Glory! glory! glory!" or else tooting on penny trumpets, loaned them for that purpose?

You cannot deny that this description of heaven is substantially that usually given by the orthodox champions of the Bible. And yet, whatever such a heaven might be to other saints, to me, it would be a place of intolerable tor-

ments. I could not endure to stand there forever, in the same spot, crying the same monotonous words: Glory! glory! glory! or tooting, on my penny trumpet, the same monotonous sounds, up at the one whose abominable plan had doomed my loved ones to the unutterably fearful torments which I have endeavored to depict. My tootings would be but the sad wailings of a bleeding heart, and I would try to steal away from the hateful sights and the hateful sounds of this so-called heaven, and go down to hell to my poor, suffering, and infinitely wronged children, whose innocent prattle used to make my heart so glad when they were the lights, the joys, of my old earthly home. But I am making too long a digression.

As to what became of the souls of the people who were destroyed by the deluge, we are not informed. Indeed, if, at that early period of the world's history, any such things as souls had been invented, we have not a particle of evidence of that fact. All of my own researches go to show that souls did not come into anything like general use until over fifteen hundred years afterwards. Admitting, however, that all those people did have souls, what became of those souls? Did God take them right into heaven, or did he intensify their torments by the suddenness of their transition from the cold waters of the deluge to the intensely fierce fires of hell? There was an important difference between these two methods of disposing of those souls, and the champions of the Bible ought to be able to inform us which one of them God adopted on that occasion. If, in the form of souls, those ungodly rascals were taken right into heaven, out of the wet, they were, undeniably, the most fortunate people that ever lived. By an almost painless death, and without living separated from those they loved, they were all ushered, at once, into the unspeakable joys of heaven. If, however, they were incontinently hustled right out of the water into the fiercest fires of hell, their fate was certainly a very melancholy one.

As a rule, the champions of the Bible, for obvious

reasons, are not fond of discoursing upon this part of the subject. Some of them, however, assume that God promptly damned all of those people except the young children whom he took to himself in heaven. As a reason for this marked discrimination between the children and the adults, these champions assign the fact that the children had not sinned as had the adults. This argument, however, although a very specious one, is, nevertheless, a very fallacious one, and does not, in the least, tend to justify the discrimination in question. Had these children been permitted to live until they became adults, they would, without doubt, have become just as great sinners as were those who were already adults. The innocence of the children, therefore, was due entirely to the apparently accidental circumstance (for which they could claim no credit), that they had never yet had a chance to sin. Were they, then, any better than were the adults? Were they not simply undeveloped sinners of the same kind? Could not God foresee what sins they would commit, if their lives were extended, just as he had foreseen what sins the adults would commit, whose lives had been extended? And was it not entirely for prospective sins that, one hundred and twenty years before, he had passed, upon those who were now adults, the double doom of death and damnation? At the time that the sentence of death was passed upon them, all the victims of the deluge, being, with very few exceptions, still unborn, were, of necessity, equally innocent, or equally guilty. As yet, none of them were actually guilty; all of them were prospectively so. The only difference was that, upon God's prevision, the prospective sins of those who were predestinated to be adults at the time of the deluge fell before that event, and, hence, at the time of the deluge, existed, as accomplished facts, in the past; while the prospective sins of those who were predestinated to be children at the time of the deluge, fell after that event, and, hence, at the time of the deluge, were still in the future, and still unaccom-

plished. But did this difference of time, at which these two sets of prospective sins were to be committed, make any difference in the nature of the sins themselves, or in the characters of the prospective sinners who were to commit them? Were not these two sets of sins equally present to God? Was not a sin prospectively committed one hundred and twenty-one years in the future, just as offensive as was a sin of the same kind prospectively committed only one hundred and twenty years in the future? And was not the party, prospectively guilty of the sin of the former date, just as much an object of punishment, in God's eyes, as was the party prospectively guilty of the sin of the latter date?

Besides all these things, we know that God could not possibly have foreseen what persons would exist in the future, and of what sin each one of them would be guilty, until he had himself made out a complete plan or map of the future, and had given each of these persons, together with his apportionment of sins, a place on that plan or map. We know, too, that God could not possibly have foreseen the dates at which certain predestinated persons would live in the future, and the dates at which they would, severally, be guilty of certain predestinated sins, until he had himself fixed those dates upon his map of the future. Those persons, therefore, that he foresaw would be adults, at the time of the deluge, were, evidently, to be so simply because he had himself assigned to them, severally, such positions, on his map of the future, that, at the time of the deluge, they could not possibly be otherwise than adults. So of the sins of which he foresaw that, previous to the deluge, these persons would, severally, be guilty. If, at the time of the deluge, these sins had already been committed, this fact was, evidently, because, on his map of the future, God had himself so fixed the dates, at which they were, severally, to be committed, that, at the time of the deluge, they could not possibly be otherwise than already committed. If, then,

because he foresaw that, at the time fixed for the deluge, those persons would be adults, and would be guilty of actual transgressions, he doomed them to eternal damnation, he evidently did so simply because of the position which he had himself assigned to them, on his map of the future. In other words, he evidently doomed them to inevitable damnation, at the very same moment that he predestinated them to existence. And all this is equally true of those whom our champions of the Bible would fain have us believe that, on the occasion in question, God graciously took, from the cold waters of the deluge, right into his own bright mansions of bliss. If God foresaw that, at the time fixed for the deluge, these persons would still be infants, and that, from want of power to be otherwise, they would still be innocent of actual transgressions, he evidently foresaw these things simply because, on his map of the future, he had himself assigned to these persons, severally, such positions that, at the time fixed for the deluge, they could not possibly be otherwise than still infants, and still innocent of actual transgressions. And if, because of this, their foreseen infancy and innocence, God elected them to eternal life, he evidently did so simply because of the position which he had himself assigned to them, on his map of the future. In other words, he evidently elected them to eternal life at the very same moment that he predestinated them to existence. And this same doctrine of pre-election and pre-condemnation, which makes God a monster of partiality, injustice, and cruelty, may be extended, from the victims of the deluge, and, with equal truth and propriety, be applied to all the people that ever have existed, or ever yet will exist upon the earth.

Admitting, however, that God was such a monster, there still arises a very grave question in regard to the exact age, size, or degree of intelligence, below which he saved those victims of the deluge, and above which he damned them. As a dividing line, he was bound to fix

upon some certain age, some certain size, or some certain degree of intelligence. A difference, therefore, of one minute in age, of one ounce in weight, or of one idea in intelligence, would, in many instances, have determined whether a person was to be eternally saved, or eternally damned. To such an individual, the dividing line was a matter of vast importance. What, then, was that dividing line? Let it have been what it may, however, when making out his map of the future, God himself, unalterably, fixed every individual's position, on the one side or the other of that dividing line. No one, therefore, on the one side, could possibly miss heaven; and no one, on the other side, could possibly escape hell. And this remark is equally true of all the balance of mankind.

In former lectures, I fully proved that the book which contains this story of the deluge is totally unauthentic and unworthy of belief. In my present lecture, by proving that no such deluge ever could have possibly occurred, I have proved the whole story to be, at best, a baseless fabrication. Admitting, however, that such a deluge did occur, was it not a huge failure? Did it render the human race any better? And was it not a humiliating confession, on God's part, that he was totally unable any longer to control the poor weak creatures whom his own hands had made, and whom he had, so boastingly, pronounced "very good?"

LECTURE NINTH.

THE EXODUS.

OF all the incredible stories gravely related in the Bible, the most extravagant, perhaps, is that concerning the Hebrews, from the time that Joseph was sold into Egypt, to the time of their final settlement in the land of Canaan. According to the generally accepted chronology of the Bible, this story covers a period of about two hundred and seventy-eight years. Since, however, the departure of the Hebrews from Egypt is the most important event mentioned in it, I shall treat the whole story under the single title of the Exodus.

This story as fully sets reason, science, and common sense at defiance as do any of the tales of Gulliver, Sindbad the Sailor, or Jack the Giant-killer. I am aware that this is a very grave charge to bring against a story that is generally accepted and revered as a portion of the "Inspired Word of God." Before I close, however, I will prove that the charge is, in every respect, a perfectly just one.

Notwithstanding the monstrous extravagance of this story, it claims to be simply a concise and correct history of the Hebrews during the period above named. The principal events mentioned in it are represented as having occurred according to the ordinary laws of nature. No matter, then, how hard pressed the champions of the Bible may find themselves, in their efforts to explain away the difficulties involved in this story, they have no right to assume, for any of these events, a *miraculous* character not claimed for them by the authors of the story.

First of all, I will notice what is said of the patriarch Judah and his family. From the chronology of the Bible we learn that, at the very utmost, Judah was only four years older than his half-brother Joseph. When, therefore, at the age of seventeen, Joseph was sold into Egypt, Judah could not have been more than twenty-one years of age. Be this as it may, however, only twenty-two years elapsed, from the selling of Joseph, to the departure of Jacob and his family into Egypt, and it is principally with these twenty-two years that we are concerned. But how do we know that only twenty-two years elapsed between the two events above mentioned? In Gen. xxxvii, 2-28, we learn that Joseph was seventeen years of age, at the time he was sold into Egypt; and, in Gen. xli, 46, we learn that he was thirty years of age when he stood before Pharaoh. This latter event, as we learn from the balance of the chapter, was followed by seven years of wonderful plenty, and these by about two years of famine, that Jacob and his family endured before they went down into Egypt. These seven years of plenty, and two years of famine, added to thirty years, gives us thirty-nine years as Joseph's age at the time Jacob went down into Egypt; and this number, diminished by seventeen, gives us the twenty-two years which I claim between the two events in question. In this estimate, I am sustained by the chronology of the Bible. Let us see, then, what Judah and his family accomplished in these twenty-two years.

From Gen. xxxviii, we learn that, soon after the selling of Joseph, Judah formed the acquaintance of a young Canaanitish woman, whom he courted and married, and who, at single births, bore him three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. Allowing that Mrs. Judah bore one son a year, and this is about the best she could have done, the oldest, had he lived, would have been about twenty-one years of age at the time that Jacob went down into Egypt. The second, had he lived, would have been about twenty years of age at that time, and the youngest, who did live, about

nineteen years of age. Er, however, married a young woman by the name of Tamar, and then, because he "was wicked in the sight of the Lord, the Lord slew him." How long the widow Er remained in mourning for her deceased husband, we are not informed. As was the custom among the Hebrews, however, Onan, her husband's oldest surviving brother, finally "went in unto her," but performed the solemn duties of the occasion in so slovenly a manner that God, in huge disgust, "slew him also." After the death of Onan, Tamar, for some time, remained a widow, at her father's house, waiting for Shelah to grow up and become of marriageable age. The accepted chronology of the Bible makes it two years. Whatever the time may have been, it was sufficient to enable Shelah to pass from boyhood to manhood; and sufficient, too, after he had become a man, to convince Tamar that he did not intend to come "in unto her" at all.

When Tamar became fully satisfied that the ungallant Shelah did not propose to put in an appearance, in her bed-chamber, she became greatly incensed, as well she might, at his utter failure to appreciate her charms. In order, therefore, to have as good a time as possible, under the circumstances, and, at the same time, to avenge her slighted charms, this buxom widow cunningly got up a *liaison* with her father-in-law, the righteous old Judah himself. The result of this *liaison* was that, at one birth, she bore to Judah two sons, Pharez and Zarah. These two sons then grew to manhood, and one of them, Pharez, in his turn, begat two sons, Hezron and Hamul, both of whom were born in time to be numbered, by name, as two of the seventy that went down into Egypt.

As I have already shown, Shelah could not have been born more than nineteen years before the departure into Egypt. Within these nineteen years, we have six consecutive periods: 1st, the period required by Shelah to grow from birth to manhood; 2d, the period during which Tamar waited, after "she saw that Shelah was grown," to

see whether he would, or would not, come "in unto her;" 3d, the period of nine months, required by her to bear the twins, Pharez and Zarah; 4th, the period required by Pharez to grow from birth to manhood; 5th, the period, of at least nine months, required by his wife to bear Hezron and Hamul; 6th, the period that elapsed after the birth of these two children, before the departure into Egypt.

For obvious reasons, the two nine-month periods, named in this list, cannot be rendered any shorter; and, their sum, taken from nineteen years, leaves us only seventeen and a half years for the other four consecutive periods. Even this short time we obtain by unwarrantably assuming that Hezron and Hamul were either twins, or else were born, at the same time, of different mothers. To have them born, at separate births, of the same mother, would, of necessity, reduce our already fearfully short time by nearly a year. This reduction of time, we evidently cannot bear. Assuming, therefore, that these two children were born at the same time, and allowing only six months for the period during which Tamar waited for Shelah to come in unto her after she saw that he "was grown," and also for the period that elapsed after the birth of Hezron and Hamul before the departure into Egypt, we have just seventeen years to divide between the consecutive lives of Shelah and Pharez. Dividing this time equally between them, we have Shelah only eight and a half years old at the time that he "was grown" and fit to go in unto Tamar as her husband. We also have Pharez only of the same age at the time he became a patriarch by begetting Hezron and Hamul. This was quite an improvement upon the slow-going ancestors of Shelah and Pharez. Abraham begat no children till he was eighty-six years of age; Isaac none till he was sixty; and Jacob none till he was eighty-four. Our eight-and-a-half-year-old patriarchs would have had posterity of the tenth generation before these old fogies made a beginning.

I do not suppose that any intelligent person really believes that, at the tender age of eight and a half years, "Shelah was grown," and fit to enter into the marriage relation; or that, at the same tender age, Pharez became the father of two sons. It is evident, therefore, that we must either find some means by which to considerably increase the ages of these two incipient patriarchs, or else reject the whole story as an absurd fable. In order, then, to gain time for these two persons, let us suppose that, on the very day that Joseph was sold, Judah formed the acquaintance of Miss Shuah, courted her, married her, and begat upon her their first son Er. Let us also suppose that there was an interval of only ten months between the birth of Er and that of Onan, and only the same interval between the birth of Onan and that of Shelah. This is all the crowding of which these matters will possibly admit. In this way, we have Shelah born twenty-nine months after the selling of Joseph, and nineteen years and seven months before the going down into Egypt. In this way, we gain seven months on our former calculation. Let us now suppose that Tamar conceived of Judah on the very day that "she saw that Shelah was grown," and that Jacob departed into Egypt on the very day on which Hezron and Hamul were born. This is evidently all the crowding of which these matters will possibly admit. In this way we gain six more months on our former calculation. By this desperate crowding of events to the full extent of possibility, we make a total gain of thirteen months. Dividing these between our two incipient patriarchs, Shelah and Pharez, we make each a few days over nine years of age.

Blind as the champions of the Bible generally are to all that pertains to the book that they worship, some of them have been compelled to notice the monstrous absurdity of a story that involves the necessity of having boys become husbands and fathers at the extremely tender age of nine years or less. In order, therefore, as far as possible, to obviate this difficulty, some of these champions

have assumed that the marriage of Judah occurred previous to the selling of Joseph, and, consequently, more than twenty-two years before the going down into Egypt. In making this assumption, however, these champions come into direct conflict with the accepted chronology of the Bible, and with the order of events as related in the story itself. After giving an account of the selling of Joseph, the author, without any break in his narrative, goes right on and says: "And it came to pass at *that time*, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah, and he took her, and went in unto her. And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er" (Gen. xxxviii, 1-3). The phrase "*at that time*," evidently refers to something mentioned in the preceding verse, which reads as follows: "And the Midianites sold him [Joseph] into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's and captain of the guard." From this, it is clear that Judah's marriage was *subsequent*, not only to the selling of Joseph to the Midianites, but, also, to the re-selling of him by them, to Potiphar. And do these champions, by assuming that the author of the story *lies* in regard to the *time* of Judah's marriage, prove that he necessarily *tells the truth* in regard to all *other matters*?

Admitting, however, that, in regard to this one particular matter, these champions of the Bible do know more than did the author of the story, how much do they gain by the admission? We have already seen that, at the time of the selling of Joseph, Judah, at the very most, was only twenty-one years of age. Bishop Colenso, and many other able Bible critics, make him, at that time, only twenty years of age. How much farther back, then, can we venture to place his marriage than it is placed by the Bible? If we place it back seven years, we have him married at the ridiculously tender age of only thirteen, or, at most, fourteen years; and then, when we divide these seven

years equally between our nine-year-old patriarchs, we make them only twelve and a half years old. We could not possibly take enough time from Judah to make these other two little boys anything like marriageable men. In any view of the case, therefore, the whole story is evidently an absurd fable.

Speaking of the period in question, the great Commentator, Dr. Clarke, candidly confesses that, "in such a short space of time, it is *impossible* that so many transactions could have taken place." Bishop Colenso, too, one of the ablest Bible critics of the world, notices the insurmountable difficulties involved in this matter, and, like a true man, rejects the whole story as an absurd fiction. Kurtz also notices these same difficulties, but, like a true priest, attempts to prop up the story, and thus sustain the Bible, by unblushingly assuming that, although they were numbered, by name, as two of the seventy Hebrews that went down into Egypt, Hezron and Hamul were not born until many years after their arrival in Egypt—that they were numbered and named as going down into Egypt, because they did go down thither, in the loins of their father, Pharez, who, at that time, was, himself, an infant. A strange explanation, truly! Why none of the rest of Jacob's unborn posterity—why the whole future nation of the Hebrews were not thus numbered and named as thus going down into Egypt, on that occasion, in the loins of their respective fathers, our learned champion of the Bible does not see fit to inform us. Many others went down into Egypt in the loins of adult fathers, and were begotten and born long before the infant, Pharez, was capable of paternity. To me, therefore, it seems that, if any were thus numbered and named as going down into Egypt, it should have been those who were most nearly approaching the time of their conception, and of their birth. Why, then, were all of these overlooked, and two others counted in who were not to be conceived and born until many years later? The reason is very obvious. It is simply the fact that the

great blunder committed by the inventor of the story, in having three consecutive generations of the same family born within the space of nineteen years or less, renders it absolutely necessary to either reject the whole story as fabulous, or assume that one of these generations, Hezron and Hamul, were named and numbered, by anticipation, many years before their conception and their birth. In other words, Kurtz and other similar champions of the Bible attempt to sustain the *truth* of the *story* as a *whole*, by proving that a *certain portion* of it is, undeniably, *false*. Their mode of reasoning is exactly similar to that of the boy who argued that, because one cupful of the milk which he was peddling was found to be very full of *dirt*, his *store* of *milk* as a *whole*, must be very *clean*. But what kind of a book is it that thus forces its champions to resort to assumptions so utterly unwarrantable, and so monstrously absurd?

Let us now notice Benjamin's exploits as a procreator. As to the age of this patriarch at the time of the going down into Egypt, there is a great diversity of opinions among the champions of the Bible. In order to sustain the Bible, they find it necessary to make him as old as they possibly can. Most of them, therefore, make him, at that time, about twenty-four years of age, and, in my notice of him, I will accept this estimate. That he was much younger than this, however, and not yet nearly grown, appears evident from the fact that, in speaking of him to Joseph, Judah constantly applies to him the terms, "*lad*," "*child*," "*little one*," etc., which are never applied to full-grown men. During the delivery of this speech, which is given in Gen. xliv, 18-34, Benjamin was himself present. Had he, therefore, really been anything more than a mere "*lad*," a mere "*child*," a "*little one*," etc., Judah, in applying to him these terms, would have acted in an extremely ridiculous manner. Judah would certainly not have thus pleaded the tender age of a full-grown man of twenty-four years. Besides this, all the paintings and pictures, both ancient and modern, of Benjamin at that

time, agree in representing him as a mere *child*, but little more than half the size of his full-grown brothers. His comparative size and appearance would indicate an age of about thirteen years.

Whatever his age and his size may have been, however, this "lad," this "child," this "little one" was, at that very time, the father of ten sons, who are numbered by name, in Gen. xlvii, 21, as of the seventy that went down into Egypt. Was not the fruitfulness of this "little one" rather wonderful? Does it not become more so, when we reflect that none of his eleven brothers—all of whom were much older than himself—had more than seven children? How did he, at so tender an age, manage to beget so many sons? So far as I am aware, no one claims that he had more than one wife, or that any of his sons were twins, triplets, quadruplets, quintuplets, or anything of that kind. They all seem to have been born at single births, and of one mother.

Dr. Clarke and some other champions of the Bible, have this remarkably enterprising "lad" marry at fifteen years of age, and then so bestir himself, in the good work, that, in the few months or years remaining to him before going down into Egypt, he performed the wonderful feat, for such a "lad," of begetting the ten sons in question. That the thing here assumed comes within the bounds of *possibility*, I admit; but does it come within the bounds of *probability*? Tracing Benjamin's genealogy all the way back to Adam, we find that only one of his whole line of ancestors begat a child before his thirtieth year; and that that one was twenty-nine years of age when he performed this act. We find that the average age, at which this entire line of ancestors severally begat their first children, was over ninety-eight years. We also find that, of this line, the four generations, immediately preceding Benjamin, averaged seventy-five years of age at the time that they severally began to beget children. Is it at all credible, then, that the long-established custom of the family,

of not marrying until late in life, was so suddenly and so radically changed that Benjamin began to beget children at fifteen years of age—at just one-fifth the average age at which the same thing was begun by the nearest four of his ancestors, and at only a little over one-seventh of the average age at which it was begun by all of his ancestors? So in the case of Judah, which we have just examined. He, together with his sons and his grandsons, represent three generations, who, as we have already seen, must, on an average, have begun the laudable business of begetting children at the extremely tender age of thirteen years or less; while Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the three next preceding generations, did not begin the same laudable business, until at an average age of nearly seventy-seven years, or six times the average age of the three generations represented by Judah and his family. Is so great a change, in so short a time, at all credible?

Some of the champions of the Bible, not wishing to be too hard upon a “child,” and a “little one” at that, permit Benjamin to beget most of his sons, if not all of them, after his arrival in Egypt. These champions have the ten young Benjamins in question named and numbered, by anticipation, as going down into Egypt in the loins of their father. How hard pressed, not to say dishonest, these champions of the Bible must be, when they resort to assumptions so unwarrantable, so absurd, and so contradictory to the plain teachings of the Bible! By the same process of reasoning, I can prove that I was an American officer in the war of the Revolution; having been present in the loins of my father’s grandfather, who served in that capacity.

From Gen. xlv, 23, we learn that Dan had only one son; and yet, from the 1st and the 2d chapters of Numbers, we learn that, at the time of the Exodus, the tribe of Dan, from this one son, had increased to sixty-two thousand seven hundred men capable of bearing arms; while, in the same time, from ten sons, the tribe of Benjamin had in-

creased to only thirty-five thousand four hundred men capable of bearing arms. This gives us, for two hundred and fifteen years, a ratio of increase, in the tribe of Dan, eighteen times greater than that in the tribe of Benjamin. And yet the two tribes were living in the same country, and surrounded by the same circumstances. So great a difference, therefore, for so long a period, in the ratio of increase, in these two tribes, certainly does not come within the bounds of reasonable credibility.

This wonderful and unaccountable difference, however, becomes still more incredible when we reflect that Benjamin's own personal ratio of increase, ten sons in ten years or less from the time he became capable of paternity, was at least thirty times greater than that of Dan, only one son in thirty years or more from the time he became capable of paternity. From a ratio of thirty times greater, in his own person, to one eighteen times less, in his posterity, shows a relative falling-off of four thousand eight hundred per cent. in the tribe of Benjamin. This prodigious, and utterly unaccountable falling-off sets at defiance all the known laws of human reproduction, and brands the whole story as simply an absurd fable.

From Gen. 1, 46, we learn that Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years. This would make his death occur seventy-one years after Jacob's arrival in Egypt. Then, according to our accepted chronology of the Bible, thirty-one years after Joseph's death, or one hundred and two years after Jacob's arrival in Egypt, "there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are *more and mightier than we*" (Ex. i, 8, 9). In the preceding verse, the author, in advance, confirms this unqualified assertion by declaring that "the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed *exceeding mighty*: and the *land* was *filled* with them." Can these assertions be true? Can it be possible that, in so short a time, seventy persons increased to such

an extent that “the *land* was *filled* with them,” and that they were “*more* and *mightier*” than were the Egyptians, who were already one of the greatest of nations before Jacob’s arrival in their country? After making these incredible statements, the author goes right on and declares that, in order to check their fruitful increase, the king had the Hebrews oppressed in various ways; that he “made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field;” that he required all their male infants to be slain, etc. The author also informs us that the more the Hebrews were thus “*afflicted*, the more they *multiplied* and *grew*.” But is this last assertion at all credible? Do we not all know that afflictions always tend to retard, and never to promote the increase of population?

Besides this, if, at the end of one hundred and two years after their arrival in Egypt, these wonderfully fruitful people had so increased that the “*land*” was already “*filled* with them,” and that they were already “*more* and *mightier*” than were the Egyptians; and if, as the Bible declares that they did, they still continued to increase in this unexampled manner, why did they submit, as the Bible also declares that they did, for at least one hundred and thirteen more years, to be the vilest of slaves to that fewer and less mighty people, the Egyptians? Why did they, during all these years, tamely submit to see their male infants butchered, in cold blood, before their very eyes, by this fewer and weaker people? Is it credible that the “*more*” and the “*mightier*” would thus submit to the *fewer* and *weaker*? Admitting, however, that they did submit to all these monstrous outrages, did they deserve the name of men? Having the power to be free, and refusing to exercise that power, proves conclusively that they preferred the vilest of slavery to the fullest of liberty; and having the power to protect the lives of their male infants, and refusing to exercise that power, proves conclusively that they preferred to have those infants thus cruelly

butchered. What a frightful commentary this is upon the character of God's chosen people! But can a story be true, which thus brands a whole nation with being worse than brutes? So long as it has power to do so, even a swine will defend its own liberty, and the lives of its young. And were the Hebrews more degraded than swine? Was not the parental instinct the same in the Hebrews that it is in ourselves? And would we stand thus tamely by and see our infants butchered, in cold blood, by a weaker people?

The duty of destroying the male infants of the Hebrews was, at first, assigned to Shiprah and Puah, two Hebrew midwives. These midwives, however, having failed to satisfactorily perform this important duty, the king ordered all his people to destroy the male infants of the Hebrews whenever and wherever found.

Some of the different systems of Bible chronology now in use have this infamous edict issued and put in force in the same year in which Joseph died, and only seventy-one years after Jacob's arrival in Egypt. This places the date of that edict sixty-four years before the birth of Moses, and one hundred and forty-four years before the Exodus. Dr. Clarke, however, and some other able chronologists, correctly believing that seventy-one years from Jacob's arrival in Egypt was rather too short a time in which for seventy Hebrews to become "*more and mightier*" than the whole great Egyptian Nation, have very wisely, and very generously, placed the date of that edict thirty-one years after the death of Joseph, thus giving the Hebrews one hundred and two years in which to achieve their wonderful increase. This arrangement, which, to the champions of the Bible, is the most favorable one that could be made, and which is the one I shall adopt, places the date of the edict in question only thirty-three years before the birth of Moses, and only one hundred and thirteen years before the Exodus.

Since, even according to this the most favorable arrangement of dates, the cruel edict in question had been rigidly enforced for the last one hundred and thirteen years of their sojourn in Egypt, it is evident that, with the exception of the very few who were over one hundred and thirteen years of age, the males, who went forth in what is called the Exodus, must have been only the comparatively few who, like Moses, had been successfully *concealed* during *childhood*. But from Ex. xii, 37, and Num. i, 45-47, we learn that, exclusive of those belonging to the tribe of Levi, there were, at the time of the Exodus, over six hundred thousand male Hebrews capable of bearing arms. And now, let me ask, is it at all within the bounds of reasonable credibility, that, among an enslaved people, living, for the most part, in tents, or in very small houses, in an extremely level and open country, so immense a number of male infants could have been successfully hidden, during the entire period of their childhood, from the tens of thousands of Egyptian spies and detectives who would, undoubtedly, have been on the watch for them? Would not the various task-masters, and other officers, placed over them, have known of almost every case of childbirth among the Hebrew women of their respective charges? How, then, did so many male infants manage to escape?

I am aware that, in order to shorten as much as possible the time during which the edict in question was in force, certain champions of the Bible place the date of this edict only six years before the birth of Moses, and only eighty-six years before the Exodus. This change of date, however, does not help the matter very much. All the men who escaped death, by being born before the edict was issued, must, of necessity, at the time of the Exodus, have been over eighty-six years of age, and, consequently, too old to be capable of bearing arms. That immense army, therefore, of over six hundred thousand men capable of bearing arms, are still unaccounted for.

In order to escape the difficulty involved in this matter, certain champions of the Bible assume that the cruel edict in question was not continued in force for many years after the birth of Moses. This mere assumption, however, unsupported by a particle of evidence, amounts to nothing as an argument. We have not even the slightest intimation that the edict in question ever ceased to be enforced. On the contrary, the Bible plainly teaches that, so far from being diminished, the oppressions of the Hebrews were constantly increased during the entire remainder of their stay in Egypt. Indeed, since the Bible unqualifiedly declares that the more the Hebrews were "*afflicted*, . . . the more they *multiplied* and *grew*," and since the killing of their infants was certainly one of the means by which they were *afflicted*, it was undeniably one of the means by which "*they multiplied and grew*." Why, then, should the champions of the Bible wish to have the edict in question revoked at all? Why do they not boldly take up the Bible argument, and contend that, by the *general killing* of the *male infants*, the *number of men, capable of bearing arms*, was greatly increased?

There is also another matter connected with this story, which the champions of the Bible would do well to explain. This is the statement that, of all the Hebrews that went down into Egypt, only one in every thirty-five was a female. Now we very well know that, in all communities, consisting of a dozen or more families, the entire number of births of the one sex is always about the same as the entire number of the other. Is it at all credible, then, that, of a community consisting of fifteen or more families, over ninety-seven per cent. were males, and less than three per cent. females? How can the champions of the Bible account for this unparalleled and unnatural disproportion of the sexes?

As I have already said, there were, at the time of the Exodus, over six hundred thousand Hebrews capable of bearing arms. Including the Levites, there were six hun-

dred and twenty-five thousand eight hundred and fifty. This number capable of bearing arms, especially when we consider that these were only those who had been successfully concealed from Pharaoh's baby-killers, would indicate an entire population of about five million; and many theologians estimate them at about this number. Dr. Clarke estimates them at three million two hundred and sixty-three thousand, exclusive of a vast number of aged and infirm persons who were unable to travel on foot. His estimate is undoubtedly full low, and yet, to give my opponents all the advantages they can possibly ask, I will estimate the entire Hebrew population, at the time of the Exodus, at only three million souls. Indeed, we will find it sufficiently difficult, by the ordinary process of nature, to derive even this comparatively small number, from seventy persons, in the short space of two hundred and fifteen years; or, as Clarke gives it, in the still shorter space of one hundred and ninety-six years (Com. Ex. xii, 37).

As to what the Hebrew population numbered, at the time the two midwives, Shiprah and Puah, were required to destroy all the new-born male infants, we have no certain means of knowing. All the information we have upon the subject is that they were "*exceeding mighty*;" that "*the land was filled with them*;" that they were "*more and mightier*" than were the whole great Egyptian Nation. Although indefinite, this information certainly indicates an immense population. Indeed, the ratio of increase that would give us from three to five millions, at the time of the Exodus, could not give us less than fifteen hundred thousand, at the time in question. Few Bible critics estimate them at less than this number; and hence I shall not be considered extravagant when I estimate them at this number. As we have already seen, the only question is in regard to the date at which the edict for the destruction of the male infants was issued. In regard to this date the champions of the Bible are generally very inconsistent. When dealing with the question of the increase of popu-

lation, they generally throw the date in question as far forward as possible, so as to give the Hebrews time, previous to that date, to become "more and mightier" than the whole Egyptian Nation. When, however, they come to deal with the question of the killing of the male infants, then, on the contrary, they usually throw the date in question as far back as possible, so as to have a comparatively small population for the two midwives in question to deal with. Letting this pass, however, and putting the Hebrew population, at the time in question, at only one million five hundred thousand, let us see what we can do with them.

Allowing an average of six persons to every family, we have two hundred and fifty thousand families; and allowing one birth every two years to each of the families, we have one hundred and twenty-five thousand births every year, or three hundred and forty every day. This would have given each of the two midwives in question an average of one hundred and seventy cases every day, or one case every eight minutes. Allowing the midwives to have labored only fifteen hours a day, they would have had one case every five minutes of their working hours. This calculation, you will notice, is based upon an assumed degree of fruitfulness which is not at all uncommon at the present day. As I shall presently show, however, the fruitfulness of the Hebrews, during the whole period of their stay in Egypt, must have been at least five times greater than I have here assumed that it was. Each of the two midwives, therefore, must have one case of child-birth every minute of his working hours. This would have kept him quite busy, even if the births had all occurred in the same city, and exactly one minute apart.

The Hebrews, however, were, for the most part, a pastoral people, and, in order to find pasturage for their almost innumerable flocks and herds, they must, of necessity, have been scattered out over a vast extent of territory. Of the nine hundred or more cases of child-birth that each of

those two midwives was required to attend every day, many would have occurred at the same moment, and in different parts of this extensive territory. Whenever the services of one of these midwives were required, he would have to be notified of the fact by a messenger, sent on foot, or, at best, on the back of an ass or of a camel. This messenger would frequently be many days, or even weeks, in following up and searching for the midwife whose services he desired to obtain, and who, of necessity, was constantly hurrying hither and thither, throughout the whole land of Egypt. When finally notified, the midwife would have to reach the place to which he was called, by such slow methods of travel as were then in use. It is little wonder, then, that, under circumstances so unfavorable to success, these two poor overworked midwives failed to satisfactorily execute the king's cruel order concerning the killing of all the male infants. It is no wonder that the Hebrew women were "lively," and that they were delivered before the midwives could "come in unto them." The celebrated Hebrew scholar, Eben Ezra, estimates that the duties assigned to these two midwives, would have required the services of at least five hundred midwives.

All these difficulties would the two midwives in question have had to contend against, even if, as promptly as possible, they had been notified of all the cases in which their services were required. But would expectant parents have given any notice at all to those whose business was the killing of young infants? Would not such parents have carefully concealed the birth of their children from these professional baby-killers? How, then, could these midwives have known when and where to go to practice their horrid profession? And would it have been safe for two midwives, or even for five hundred, to go prowling about, among an "exceeding mighty" people, for the express purpose of killing infants? Compelled, by their profession, to pass about the country singly, would they have long survived the vengeance of the people whose

infants it was their trade to butcher? Would not each midwife have had to be attended, in all his journeyings, by an army of well-armed soldiers? Were not the Hebrews human beings? Was not human nature the same in them that it is in us? And how would it fare with two midwives, or with a thousand times that number, should they go prowling about among us, for the express purpose of butchering our new-born babes? Does not every parental—every human instinct declare this monstrous story to be a gross libel upon human nature? Does not your own common sense teach you, too, that no king of Egypt, or of any other country, was ever so far gone in idiocy, as to seriously issue such an edict, and expect it to be executed? In defense of human intelligence, I will boldly say that those who believe this monstrous story are either fools, who cannot reason, or cowards, who dare not reason.

In Gen. xv, 16, we read: "But in the fourth generation, they shall come hither again." This was spoken to Abraham, concerning his posterity who, as God declared, were to be, for a time, oppressed in a foreign land, but who, "in the fourth generation," were to return and possess the land in which Abraham then was. The generation here mentioned could not have been the fourth from Abraham himself, since this generation went down into Egypt and died there. It could have been no other than the fourth generation of those whose lives were spent in Egypt. The first generation, therefore, in this count, consisted of Jacob's fifty-two grandchildren, Hanoah, Phallu, Kohath, Merari, etc. The second generation consisted of the children of this generation, Amram, Izhar, Hebron, etc. The third generation consisted of the children of this generation, Aaron, Moses, Korah, etc. The fourth generation consisted of the children of this generation, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, Elkanah, and the great body of those who went out of Egypt with Moses. This view is sustained by over a dozen cases in which the four generations are mentioned by name.

According to the most commonly accepted chronology of the Bible, these four generations covered a period of two hundred and fifteen years. I shall, therefore, use this estimate, as far more favorable to my opponents, although Clarke and some other able Bible critics make the period in question only one hundred and ninety-six years. Dividing two hundred and fifteen years equally between the four generations in question, gives to each fifty-three and three-quarters years. Some claim that this is too much time to allow to one generation. Be this as it may, fifty-three and three-quarters years are a good deal less than the average time covered by each of the four next preceding generations, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's sons; and only a little over half the time covered, on an average, by each of all the generations back to Adam. Besides this, while we have a multitude of cases in which just four generations are mentioned as covering the period in question, we have not a single case in which more than four are mentioned. Indeed, the plain language of the Bible forbids us to increase this number of generations. Had six or seven generations been required to cover the period in question, then the Hebrews would, undeniably, have come out of Egypt in the sixth or the seventh generation, and not, as the Bible declares that they did, in the fourth.

If, at the time of the Exodus, there were any of the first and the second generations living, their number must have been too small to be worth mentioning. Of the third generation, of which Moses and Aaron were representatives, there were, doubtless, a considerable number still living. The number of survivors, however, of this generation, would scarcely have equaled the number already deceased of the fourth. So the numbers already born of the fifth generation would not have more than equaled the numbers not yet born of the fourth. We may, therefore, safely reckon the whole three million who went out with Moses as representing the fourth generation alone.

We have, then, given, the last term of a geometrical

series, three million; the first term, fifty-two; and the number of terms, four, to find the ratio, or the number of children that had to spring from each individual of the first three generations in order to raise the fourth generation to three million. Performing, upon these given quantities, the necessary operations, we find the required ratio of increase to have been thirty-nine to each individual, or seventy-eight to each married pair. This result we obtain by assuming that every individual born among the Hebrews lived to maturity, and did his full duty in the great work of propagating his species. This assumption, however, is evidently inadmissible. At the present time, when the population of Europe and America is increasing faster than ever before, scarce forty per cent. of all the individuals born ever live to become parents. Indeed, scarce seventy per cent. of them live to the close of their fifth year. Assuming, however, that, among the Hebrews, notwithstanding the wholesale destruction of their male infants, by the Egyptians, during a large portion of the time in question, sixty per cent. of all the individuals born, lived to become parents, each married pair would have had to turn out one hundred and thirty children. And since, in all countries, the largest families always contain over twice the average number of children, the largest families among the Hebrews could hardly have contained less than three hundred children.

This calculation is correct as applied to the whole twelve tribes of the Hebrews. The tribe of Dan, however, increased from one person of the first generation to three hundred and thirteen thousand five hundred of the fourth. Making the same calculation in this case that we made in the case of the entire people, we find that, on an average, each married pair had to produce two hundred and fifty children, and the largest families over five hundred. This, as you will readily admit, must have required something far superior to our own very popular, but extremely slow method of increasing population. Will the champions of

the Bible please inform us what that superior method was?

That the above results are very nearly correct is demonstrated by the fact that, as given in Num. iii, 43, the first born males, twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three, constituted less than the one one-hundred-and-thirty-fourth part of the entire population. This would indicate an average of one hundred and thirty-four children to each family, while my calculation gives only one hundred and thirty. In regard to the first-born males, I will say that I have included among these all the first-born males, even in cases in which one female or more had preceded them. In this I am sustained by many of the ablest Bible critics. Other Bible critics, however, contend that no male child was reckoned a first-born male unless he was the first child that his mother ever bore. If this latter hypothesis be correct, and there were as many first-born females as there were first-born males, then the first-borns of both sexes would constitute the one sixty-seventh part of the entire population, and each woman could be let off with sixty-seven children. This is the very lowest possible number that we can let them off with, and, in doing this, we involve the absurd necessity of having over one hundred per cent. of the people engaged in producing children. In the tribe of Dan, each woman, on an average, would still have to bear one hundred and twenty-nine children, and the most prolific among them about three hundred children. Being well able to do so, I will accept these latter results, and let the poor women off with only one-half the children each that the Bible evidently means to have them bear. Even the minimum number, however, of sixty-seven to every woman, indicates a degree of fecundity totally unwarrantable by the size of any Hebrew family mentioned in the whole Pentateuch, and wholly at variance with all the known laws of human reproduction. Even Kuertz admits that there is no escaping this difficulty, and, if I remember correctly what he

says on the subject, he gives to each Hebrew woman a greater number of children than I have assigned to them above. Bishop Patrick also admits that each one of the Hebrew women would have had to bear the prodigious number of children above indicated. This fact, however, does not, in the least, shake his faith. With a simplicity that is truly refreshing, he meets the difficulty like a true Christian by assuming that, by the extraordinary blessing of God, those women brought forth six children at each birth. That would have been an extraordinary blessing with a vengeance, especially if half a dozen successive litters had happened to be all males. In such a case, the mother, so extraordinarily blessed, would have had to keep thirty-six little boys closely concealed, and to nurse them only by stealth. Those enslaved Hebrews, who, without remuneration, had to work hard every day for their masters, may have regarded such monstrous fecundity on the part of their wives an extraordinary blessing of God; but what would we think of it, if, in his infinite goodness, God should vouchsafe to our wives the truly extraordinary blessing of six babies each, every year, for a dozen or more consecutive years? To say nothing of the expense of such families, how would we like, after a hard day's work, to remain awake all night giving soothing syrup, vermifuge, paregoric, catnip tea, etc., etc., etc., to six dozen squalling brats at once? Extraordinary blessing, indeed!

From all that precedes, we would naturally infer that the Hebrews were noted for large families. Such, however, does not seem to have been at all the fact. By three wives, Abraham had only eight children; by one wife, Isaac had only two; and, by four wives, Jacob had only thirteen; this latter family being the largest mentioned in the whole Pentateuch. The family mentioned as next in size was that of Benjamin, who had ten children. By how many wives these were born, we are not informed. Assuming that they were all born by one wife, they constitute the highest number mentioned as being borne by one

Hebrew mother. And have not hosts of American and of European women done much better than this? Jacob's whole thirteen children had only fifty-two children in all. This gave them an average of only four each.

In Ex. vi, 14-26, we have, including Moses, thirteen men named whose united families contained only thirty-nine children, or an average of three each. In all, then, we have here thirty-two families containing in the aggregate only one hundred and fourteen children. This gives us an average of only between three and four to each family. Taking, at random, several other families, whose numbers are given, I find they average a little less than do the thirty-two which I have just noticed. Indeed, the one hundred and fourteen children, that I have just named, give less than three each to the mothers by whom they were borne. Assuming, however, that, on an average, the Hebrew families had six children each, who grew up, and, in their turn, became parents, we have for the fourth generation in question only eleven thousand and sixteen persons, or less than the one two-hundred-and-seventy-second part of the number required by the Bible. Indeed, in order to obtain this comparatively insignificant number, we are compelled to allow fifty of Jacob's fifty-two grandchildren to marry aliens, thus giving for the first generation one hundred and two persons, instead of only fifty-two, their real number as given in the Bible.

And now, what will the champions of the Bible do with these difficulties? I have already shown that, if they attempt to increase the number of generations, they will simply give the lie to the book, the truth of which they wish to defend. Besides this, I have also shown that the number of first-borns, as compared to the entire population, demonstrates an average of at least sixty-seven children to each Hebrew mother. Without increasing the number of first-borns, we can neither increase the number of mothers, nor diminish the number of children borne by each one of them. No assumed increase of generations,

therefore, even if the plain language of the Bible would permit such increase, could remove this difficulty. What say the champions of the Bible now?

Insurmountable as these difficulties are, however, several far greater ones are yet to follow. From Ex. vi, 18-22, we learn that Kohath, the son of Levi, had four sons, all of whom seem to have had families. The names of these sons were Amram, Izhar, Uzziel, and Hebron. The first three had three children each. The last, Hebron, since his branch of the Kohath family did not become extinct, must have had children, although none are mentioned. We will assume that he had four, one more than had either of his three brothers. Of this generation of the Kohathites, then, there were thirteen persons. Of these thirteen persons, however, Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses, lived an old maid, and hence added nothing to the following generation, which was the one that went out of Egypt with Moses. That following generation, therefore, must have all proceeded from the remaining twelve persons of the generation now under consideration. Aaron and his four sons, however, being numbered as priests, were not numbered among the Levites. This leaves us only eleven persons to produce all that were numbered as Kohathites of the next generation. Of these eleven persons, one, Moses, had only two sons, and these are the only Amramites included in the next generation. Of this next generation of the Kohathites, however, as we learn from Num. iv, 28, there were eight thousand six hundred males from a month old and upward. Allowing that there were an equal number of females, the Kohathites over a month old numbered seventeen thousand two hundred. In this number, Moses and his two children are included. Since there were doubtless several hundred infants under a month old who were not numbered at all, we may safely omit Moses and his two sons without diminishing the above number, which gives an average of one thousand seven hundred and twenty children to each of the ten remaining families.

And now, will the champions of the Bible please inform us how it happened that Moses and Aaron, between them, had only six children, while each of their ten cousins had seventeen hundred and twenty? It may be answered that the God-favored institution of polygamy removes all difficulty from the solution of this question. So it might, if, instead of assuming that polygamy was extensively practiced by the ten Kohathitic patriarchs in question, the champions of the Bible would prove that such was the fact. No such proof, however, can possibly be adduced. Indeed, the circumstances, surrounding the parties in question, rendered the practice of polygamy, on anything like an extensive scale, both undesirable and impracticable. Allowing each woman to have borne seventeen or eighteen children, each one of those Kohathites must have had a hundred wives. But is it at all within the bounds of credibility that abject slaves, as those Kohathites were, ever kept up harems equal to those of the most opulent eastern princes? How could a man, forced, by the lash of a task-master, to toil, every day, without remuneration, in a brick yard, have managed to support a family of nearly two thousand women and children?

Besides this, why should these ten Kohathites have been so marked an exception to the general rule among the Hebrews of that period, who, as we have already seen, could not have practiced polygamy, to any considerable extent, without having thereby greatly increased the number of first-borns? And if we entirely ignore the comparatively small number of first-borns, and assume that polygamy, on an extensive scale, prevailed also among the other Hebrews, then the question naturally arises, where could those Hebrews have obtained so many women to each man? Of those born Hebrews, the males seem always to have outnumbered the females. Admitting, however, that the two sexes were equal in number, there would have been barely Hebrew women enough to afford each Hebrew one wife. It is evident, therefore, that, for

every Hebrew that had a hundred Hebrew wives, there must, of necessity, have been ninety-nine other Hebrews who had no Hebrew wives at all. It is clear, then, that, if only Hebrew women were used, nothing could have been gained by polygamy. Indeed, its effect would have been to produce a great loss. It is a well-known fact that, on an average, polygamous wives do not bear near so many children as do those women who live in monogamic marriage. A hundred women, all married to one man, would not bear more than one-fourth as many children as they would if each one of them had a husband to herself.

If, then, polygamy was practiced, on a sufficiently extensive scale to account for the unparalleled increase of the Hebrew population, it is evident that it must have been practiced principally upon gentile women? But where could so many gentile women have been obtained? The Egyptians were the only gentiles with whom the Hebrews, at that time, had any dealings; and, being themselves a polygamous people, the Egyptians would certainly have wanted all of their own women for their own use. Besides this, the Egyptians were the masters of the country, while the Hebrews were the slaves. And is it all credible that these haughty Egyptian masters would give their proud and aristocratic sisters and daughters, by the hundreds of thousands, for polygamous purposes, to their vile and hated slaves, to whose increase they were doing their utmost to put an effectual stop? Would not those masters, on the contrary, besides keeping all their own women for their own use, have been sure to take to themselves, for polygamous purposes, great numbers of the most beautiful of their female slaves? Has not such always been the custom, in all countries in which slavery and polygamy have ever existed? What could be more extremely absurd, then, than is the assumption that those Hebrew slaves entirely reversed this universal custom, by keeping all their own women for their own use, and by also appropriating to their own use, for polygamous purposes, vast

numbers of the sisters and the daughters of their masters? Had they taken all the Egyptian women, they would have had only two wives each, and this would not do much to remove the difficulties in question.

Thus you see that their favorite doctrine of polygamy is of no avail to the champions of the Bible. Indeed, although I am very sorry to deprive them of this favorite doctrine, from which they appear to derive so much consolation, I will now prove to these champions that, at the time of which we are speaking, the Hebrews did not practice polygamy to any considerable extent; and that, to whatever extent it may have been practiced among them, this institution was of no service to them in the increasing of their population. As I have already stated, there were, at the time of the Exodus, six hundred and twenty-five thousand eight hundred and fifty Hebrews capable of bearing arms; and, since there must have been vast numbers of men, incapacitated, by age or other infirmities, for bearing arms, we may safely estimate the entire adult male population at not less than seven hundred thousand. But how many of these were husbands and fathers? We will ascertain. As I have likewise already stated, the entire number of first-born males was only twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three. Allowing an equal number of first-born females, we have in all only forty-four thousand five hundred and forty-six first-borns of both sexes: and, since every woman who had borne children at all, must have had a first-born, of one sex or the other, the entire number of first-borns must have exactly equaled the entire number of women who, as yet, had borne children at all. If any of these forty-four thousand five hundred and forty-six mothers were polygamous wives, then we have less than forty-four thousand five hundred and forty-six Hebrews who were husbands and fathers, and over six hundred and fifty-five thousand four hundred and fifty-four who were celibates, or who, at least, had, as yet, had no children born. These figures would indicate that

only about one man in every fifteen of the Hebrews had even one wife. Before making polygamists of them, then, would not the champions of the Bible do well to furnish one wife each to the remaining fourteen-fifteenths of the Hebrew men? Finally, can this whole monstrous story be true which involves so many palpable absurdities, and which drives its champions to so many totally unwarrantable, and yet utterly unavailable assumptions?

According to the story under consideration, Pharaoh often consented, and in good faith, too, to let the Hebrews depart out of Egypt. On each of these occasions, however, he was immediately compelled, by the irresistible power of God himself, to recall that generous consent. Indeed, this unfortunate king is represented as being nothing more nor less than a helpless instrument in the hands of the Almighty. If, then, any wrong was done to the Hebrews, by means of this instrument, who was guilty of that wrong, the instrument, or the one who made and wielded that instrument?

The reason assigned for God's acting as he did, on the occasions in question, is that, for the express purpose of gaining personal notoriety, he wished to play, upon the Egyptians and their cattle, a number of really wonderful, and yet exceedingly cruel tricks, several of which he alone knew how to perform. On various occasions, he pledged his honor as a God that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, and would then, by means of Pharaoh thus hardened, perform certain acts which should be very beneficial to the Hebrews, and which should secure to himself the notoriety, or "honor," as he was pleased to call it, which he so greatly desired. If, then, on any of these occasions, Pharaoh had been able to successfully resist God's heart-hardening powers, what would have been the consequence? Would not God have been proved a liar? Would not his whole programme have proved a failure? Did not Pharaoh, then, act just as God desired that he should act? Would not God have been ruined, or at least greatly dis-

graced, by any other action on Pharaoh's part? Was not the role assigned to Pharaoh just as necessary, in God's drama, as was that assigned to Moses? Why, then, should Pharaoh have been so cruelly punished, and Moses so richly rewarded, when both were equally doing God's will?

Be all this as it may, however, the Bible declares that God did inflict the most terrible punishments, not only upon Pharaoh himself, but also upon all the people and all the cattle of Egypt. The Bible further declares that these punishments were inflicted upon the people and the cattle, not for anything that they had done, but for what God himself had done, through the instrumentality of his creature, Pharaoh, whom he declares that he raised up for the express purpose of doing these things. In a future lecture, entitled "The Miracles of the Bible," I will notice these various punishments in full. The last one of them, except the drowning of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, was the killing of all the first-borns both of the people and the cattle. This killing was a terrible calamity especially to the poor cattle, all of which, only a few days before, had already died of murrain, and most of which had also already died a second time from the effects of a terrific hail-storm. The more fortunate of these first-borns, therefore, were now destroyed for the second time; the less fortunate for the third.

The time appointed for the accomplishment of this horribly cruel and wholly unnecessary destruction of men and of cattle, was the midnight of the fourteenth day of the first month. Midnight was certainly a very appropriate hour to fix upon for the commission of so many horrible murders. Having fixed upon the hour for the commission of this infinitely monstrous outrage upon his own children, the Egyptians, God required the Hebrews to mark all of their houses with spots of blood. Of these spots, there were to be just three: one on the lintel, and one on each of the side posts of the door. The express design of these spots was to enable God to distinguish be-

tween the houses of the Hebrews and those of the Egyptians. In requiring this marking to be done, God clearly admitted that, without some such marks, he would not be able, in the darkness of night, to distinguish between the two classes of houses. How he managed, without a sign, to distinguish between the cattle of the Hebrews and those of the Egyptians, we are not informed. Neither are we informed how he managed to know, in all cases, which persons were, and which were not, first-borns.

God's orders concerning the marking of their doors seem to have been communicated, almost instantly, to the entire Hebrew population, who were strictly forbidden to go outside of the houses, during the whole of that memorable night on which all the first-borns of the Egyptians were to be murdered. These orders were communicated by Moses; but how he managed, in so short a time, to communicate them to a population of at least three million of people, scattered, as they must have been, over a large extent of country, we are not informed.

As you are all doubtless well aware, the Hebrews were peculiarly a pastoral people, depending for subsistence almost entirely upon their immense flocks and herds of domesticated animals. The Hebrews, moreover, although originally occupying only the land of Goshen, seem, at the time of which we are speaking, to have been promiscuously scattered over the whole country, among the Egyptians, who also possessed immense flocks and herds, and who, as usually estimated, numbered about seven million souls. According to this estimate, all Egypt contained about ten million inhabitants. Putting the Egyptians, however, at only three million, we still have at least six million people, and these, with their immense flocks and herds, would have certainly required a country two hundred miles square, or as large as the state of Ohio.

That the Hebrews were thus promiscuously intermingled with the Egyptians, throughout the whole country, we learn from the fact that even God himself could

not, in the darkness of the night, without a sign, distinguish the houses of the one people from those of the other. Had the Hebrews lived apart from the Egyptians, no such sign would have been necessary. We also obtain the same information from the fact that many of the Egyptians were guests in the houses of Hebrews, and from the additional fact that, in the latter part of one night, all the Egyptian families were plundered by their Hebrew neighbors. See Ex. iii, 22; xi, 2, and xii, 35, 36. This wholesale plundering of their Egyptian neighbors, by individual Hebrew families, could not possibly have been accomplished, in so short a time, had not the two peoples been promiscuously intermingled.

It is evident, then, that the country over which the Hebrews were scattered must have been sufficiently extensive to furnish sustenance both for themselves and the Egyptians, and pasturage for the united flocks and herds of these two peoples. It would certainly be unreasonable therefore, to crowd all these people, with their flocks and herds, into an area less than that which we have assumed. Even this area must have been greatly crowded. Every square mile must have contained at least one hundred and fifty persons, together with their flocks and herds, and this is a far more dense population than any pastoral country was ever known to contain. Assuming, however, that the entire population of these two nations, together with their flocks and herds, were all crowded into the small space to which we have assigned them; assuming, too, that the shape of this space was the most favorable that it could possess, and that the capital, Rameses, occupied its center, we still have many of the people living one hundred miles or more from that city. At that time, there were no telegraphs, no railroads, no means of sending speedy messages. All information had to be carried by private messengers, on foot, or, at best, on the backs of donkeys, horses, or camels. How, then, did Moses, in so short a time, manage to communicate to the whole people so many

and so minute instructions concerning the killing, the dressing, the cooking and the eating of the paschal lambs, the marking of the doors, the plundering of the Egyptians, etc., etc.?

At that time, there were no printing-presses, by means of which these numerous instructions could be published to the people. Every family, therefore, must have received them either verbally or in writing. If verbally, how many messengers were required to carry them, and who repeated over and over, to each of these messengers, until he had thoroughly committed them to memory, the names and the places of abode of all the families that he was to visit, together with the long list of instructions which he was to communicate? How long did it take each messenger to make the ignorant people understand exactly what they were to do? After half a dozen repetitions of these instructions, to each family, would one in ten of the intensely excited people have remembered them correctly? If, on the other hand, those instructions were sent in writing, who wrote them, what did he write them upon, how long did it take him, how many copies did he write, and who read them to the unlettered people to whom they were sent? The story is told as if the people all lived within three or four miles at most from Pharaoh's palace, near which Moses seems to have lived.

Besides all these things, does it not seem very strange that not the slightest curiosity, suspicion, or alarm seems to have been excited in the minds of the Egyptians by this general sending out of messengers, this general killing of a lamb at the same time by every Hebrew family, and by this general and uniform marking of all their doors? It was utterly impossible for all these things to have been done without being seen by the Egyptians, many of whom, as we have already seen, were, at that very time, guests in the houses of Hebrew families who were engaged in these mysterious proceedings? Would not the Egyptian guests, in many of these cases, have inquired of the Hebrew

friends with whom they were residing, the meaning of these mysterious proceedings? And would not many of the nobler souls among the Hebrews have warned of their impending danger those whom they truly loved of these guests, and of other Egyptians? To say that they would not have done this, is a base libel upon human nature in general, and upon Hebrew nature in particular. Ask the true woman, who loves with all the unutterable devotion of her nature, whether, knowing that her lover's life was about to be treacherously taken, she would wait and see him murdered, without giving him a word of warning? And were there not bound to be thousands of such love unions existing between Hebrew maidens and Egyptian men? Could any but a female fiend see her lover perish without making any effort to save him? And were the Hebrew women all fiends?

It may be answered, however, that the Egyptians had no need of any warning from their Hebrew friends; that they had been sufficiently warned by Moses, and that they all knew that this was the night appointed for the destruction of their first-borns. Admitting that such was the fact, however, do we not thereby greatly increase the incredibility of the whole story? Were not the Egyptians a very superstitious people? Had they not already, within a few weeks, suffered ten of the most strange and horrible plagues? Had not all of these plagues come upon them exactly as Moses had predicted that they would? Would not the Egyptians, by this time, have come to regard plagues as the order of the day? Would they not, inevitably, have been in constant dread of other impending evils? Is it at all credible, then, that these unfortunate people, though fully warned of it, should have been thus totally indifferent to this new and awful calamity? Had any of the predictions of Moses ever failed? And could the Egyptians have expected this prediction to fail? If not, would they all have quietly retired to rest, on the night in question, as the Bible teaches that they did, without

feeling a particle of interest in so momentous a matter? Would not many of them have taken the precaution to mark their doors, as the Hebrews were marking theirs? And would not many others have taken refuge, during that fearful night, in the houses of their Hebrew friends? With all our boasted freedom from fear and superstition, what would we have done under similar circumstances? And was not the love of life just as strong in those Egyptians as it is in us? What became of those Egyptian first-borns who did happen to be sojourning in Hebrew houses? Since God had his destroying angel pass over all these houses, must not all such first-borns have escaped destruction? And what had the first-borns done, more than others, that they were thus made the special objects of God's fearful vengeance? Was it a crime to be a first-born? If not, was there not something very unjust in the discrimination which was made against them? Finally, after killing all of these first-borns, did God take their souls all to heaven, or send them all to hell?

Be all these things as they may, however, we have three million Hebrews, scattered all over an extensive country, shut up in their houses at midnight; and all that I am about to relate of them from this midnight until they were out of Egypt, is represented as having occurred during the remainder of that same night, or, at least, during the remainder of the day of which that night was a part. Let us see, then, how they managed to accomplish so much in so short a time.

Putting the entire population of the country at only six million, and allowing ten persons to each house, we have six hundred thousand houses to be visited, at midnight, by the angel of death. As everybody admits, this angel was a finite being, and, consequently, could visit only one house at a time. In making his six hundred thousand calls, he must have traveled at least four hundred thousand miles. At every one of these six hundred thousand houses, he had to stop and carefully examine the door.

Every house, upon the door of which he found three spots of blood properly placed, he passed over without doing its inmates any harm. Every house, however, upon the door of which he found no such spots of blood, he entered, ascertained which one of its inmates was the first-born, and slew him. How he managed, in all cases, to distinguish the first-born, we are not informed. This is perhaps one of the "mysteries of godliness."

Thus far, we have taken into our account only the human beings with whom this bloody angel had to deal. We must not forget, however, that he also had to slay all the first-borns of the sheep, the goats, the camels, the cattle of all kinds. In order to do this, he had to visit every stable, cowshed, and sheepfold in all Egypt. Besides this, he had to search every square rod of pasture land in an area of forty thousand square miles. Some writers make the area in question over two hundred thousand square miles. Whatever the area may have been, however, he must have had to search every spot in it large enough to contain a sheep, a goat, or any other domestic animal. Having found all the cattle of every locality, he had to ascertain to which people they belonged. Then, of those belonging to the Egyptians, he had to ascertain which ones were first-borns, and slay them. How he managed, in all cases, to correctly determine the ownership of the cattle, and which ones were first-borns, we are not informed. This is probably another of the "mysteries of godliness."

When we take all these domestic animals into our calculation, we may safely extend the distance traveled by the angel in question to one million miles, and the number of calls made by him to one million five hundred thousand. He must have examined six hundred thousand doors, counted nine hundred thousand spots of blood, and slain, of men and of beasts, at least six hundred thousand first-borns. Had he been at this foul, bloody work all the first half of the night, it could not have been said, as it is, that all the first-borns were slain "at midnight." Giving him

one hour—and this is more than the Bible seems to give him—in which to perform all of this work, he had to travel nearly seventeen thousand miles a minute, examine ten thousand doors, count fifteen thousand spots of blood, and slay ten thousand first-borns. But could any finite being accomplish so much in so short a time?

Admitting, however, that all these things did occur “at midnight,” Pharaoh could not possibly have known that the calamity was a general one—that “there was not a house where there was not one dead,” until reports had reached him from all parts of Egypt, and from every house; and however rapidly the angel of death may have performed his work, these reports could not possibly have reached the king with any such speed. They had to be brought in by human messengers, who were not awakened from their slumbers till after midnight, and who then had to arise, dress themselves, ascertain the extent of the calamity they were to report, and then, in the darkness of night, start out with their report, on foot, or on the backs of donkeys, horses, or camels. For every family to have sent a messenger, would have required three hundred thousand messengers, and for Pharaoh to have heard the reports of so many would have required more time than we can afford to give him for this purpose. If every ten families sent a messenger, there would have been only thirty thousand messengers, and Pharaoh could have heard them in one-tenth of the time that would have been required to hear the reports of three hundred thousand messengers. In this case, however, it would have taken some time, especially in the more distant and sparsely settled districts, for so many families to assemble, hold their consultation, elect their messenger, etc. What we gain, therefore, in one way, by diminishing the number of messengers, we lose in another. This is very unfortunate, since time was everything on that most wonderful night of the world.

Some of these messengers had to travel over a hundred miles to reach the king's palace ; and yet, before starting, each one of them had to ascertain that all the first-borns of his own and of his neighbors' children and cattle were slain. Allowing each messenger thirty minutes in which to arise, to dress himself, to visit all his stables, cow-sheds, and pastures, to hear the reports of his neighbors, and reach the king's palace, we have half after twelve o'clock on that wonderful night.

Having received all the reports of the thirty thousand or more messengers, and having by means of these reports learned the extent of the calamity, Pharaoh at once sent for Moses and Aaron, and held with them a final consultation. Since we cannot reasonably suppose that Moses and Aaron resided in the palace, or even in its immediate vicinity, we must, of course, allow the messenger who went to call them to the palace, a little time to reach their place of abode, wherever that was. We must also, of course, allow Moses and Aaron a little time in which to arise, to make their toilets, to reach the palace, to hold their conference with the king, and to return to their own people. Allowing thirty minutes for all these things, we have one o'clock on that memorable night. Between this time and morning, or, at farthest, between this time and the next evening, the whole three million Hebrews, scattered all over a vast extent of country, and all as yet locked in the arms of slumber, had to receive warning that the time of their departure was at hand. After being warned, they had to arise, dress themselves and their little ones, make up dough in their troughs, bundle up their clothes, dig up dead men's bones to carry with them, collect their cattle from the pastures, make litters upon which to carry their sick, rob all their Egyptian neighbors, march to Rameses—in many cases over a hundred miles distant—form regular organizations, elect officers, and then march beyond the boundaries of Egypt. Since they marched out of Egypt "on the self-same day" on which the first-borns of the Egyp-

tians were slain, they must have accomplished all these things within that "self-same day." But how did they manage to accomplish so much in so short a time? In my next lecture, I will consider these matters in full.

LECTURE TENTH.

THE EXODUS.—(CONCLUDED.)

AFTER one o'clock, on the wonderful night of which I was speaking in my last lecture, Moses and Aaron must have sent out messengers to warn in the Hebrews, from all parts of Egypt. But how many messengers must have been required for this purpose? If a very great number, then it must have required a long time for Moses and Aaron to give them all their instructions; and if only a small number, then each one of them must have had allotted to him a far greater number of families than he could possibly visit in the extremely short time allowed him for this purpose. One thousand messengers would have been about as convenient a number as could have been employed. Let us assume, then, that this was the number that were employed, and that Moses and Aaron each gave instructions to five hundred of them.

Each of these messengers would have had to warn three hundred families. The names and the places of abode of all these families, therefore, together with the instructions which he was to convey to them, must have been either given to the messenger in writing, or else repeated over and over to him until they were indelibly fixed in his memory. In order to thus instruct each of these messengers, Moses and Aaron must have had upon their books, or firmly fixed in their memories, the name and the place of abode of every one of the three hundred thousand Hebrew families.

To any one who is at all acquainted with such matters, it is evident that Moses and Aaron would have required at

least fifteen days in which to thus separately instruct and send out five hundred messengers each. Assuming, however, that each of these two great leaders instructed and sent out one messenger every three seconds, we have all the messengers off in twenty-five minutes, and we can give them thirty-five minutes in which to do all their work. During this time, each messenger would have had to warn about nine families a minute, and many of them would have had to travel at least that many miles a minute.

It was now two hours past midnight, and the whole three millions Hebrews were astir. Unavoidably the most intense excitement prevailed. Called upon, at a moment's notice, to quit thus, at the dead hours of the night, the homes in which they had been born, they could not possibly get off without some delay and much confusion. They had to dress themselves and their children, make up large quantities of dough to carry with them in wooden troughs, collect their clothes into bundles convenient for carrying, bury all those that had died the day before, make litters on which to carry their sick, collect their flocks and herds from the pastures, plunder all of their Egyptian neighbors, and do a thousand other things equally necessary. Giving them one hour for all these things, we have three hours after midnight.

In a population so vast and so rapidly increasing, there must have been at least four hundred cases of child-birth every day, and at least fifty women in actual travail at any one moment. For the women who chanced to be thus in travail, at the time the notice to depart reached them, there was not a moment to wait. Those of them who could still walk had to do so, and the balance had to be carried on litters. The babes of all these women, and of at least four hundred other women each successive day, had to be born and cared for on the march. Besides these women, there must have been, at any one time, at least five thousand women who had borne children within the last fortnight, and who were not yet able to march.

Of course, all these, too, had to be carried. Including these, the sick, the cripples, the extremely aged persons, the young children, and others who were unable to march on foot, could not have been less than two hundred thousand, or one in every fifteen of the entire population. On such a march, at the present day, one in every five of the entire population, of the most hardy people known, would have to be carried. Being an enslaved people, they had no wagons, and few if any asses, horses, and camels. All writers agree that nearly everything must, of necessity, have been carried on the backs of men. The men, then, loaded down with bundles of clothes, troughs of dough, little children, sick people, etc., etc., had to rush their flocks and herds before them, through the darkness of night, at a rate, in many cases, of over one hundred miles an hour, in order to reach the place of rendezvous by four o'clock.

Three millions of people, with at least an equal number of cattle, all rushing in thus, at four times the speed of an express train on our railroads, must have caused the earth to quake for a great distance, and must have produced a noise far exceeding in loudness the most awful thunder of heaven's tremendous artillery. If the night was dark half a million torches, flashing like meteors inward from all directions, must have lit up the whole country, like a vast conflagration, and added immensely to the grandeur of a scene which was already by far the grandest the world had ever known. It was now four o'clock, and, without a moment's rest after their wonderful race, these wonderful people had to organize in proper order, and march out of Egypt during the remaining hour of that wonderful night (Ex. xii, 42).

From the most careful calculations that I can make, a promiscuous mass of three million people, and as many cattle, marching on any ordinary public highway, would form a column at least six hundred miles in length. Allowing the road on which the Hebrews traveled to have

been six times as wide as are our ordinary public highways, that mighty multitude of people and of cattle would still have formed a column at least one hundred miles in length, and the front would have had to move out that many miles before the rear could move at all. A column of this length, however, would have reached many miles beyond the Red Sea. This order of march, therefore, will never do. We must make the column many times wider and many times shorter. In doing this, however, we render it necessary to have the march made across the country without regard to roads. Allowing that one thousand two hundred individuals marched abreast, the front and the rear of that mighty multitude might not have been more than ten miles apart; and though there is no proof at all that they marched in any such order as this, the assumption that they did so is probably about the best that could be made.

How far the entire body of the Hebrews had to march in order to be out of Egypt, we do not know with any certainty. The distance is variously computed at from fifty to over eighty miles. Let the distance have been what it may, however, the Hebrews are represented as having marched that distance, and out of Egypt on "the self-same day" on which they ate the passover; or, rather, as I have already shown, on that very same night. When, however, we attempt to accomplish so much in so short a time, we find ourselves in the condition of the man who undertook to set a hundred eggs under one hen. Having tried the experiment upon a round nest, he perceived that a large number of eggs on one side of the hen were not covered. He therefore took hold of the hen and moved her toward that side of the nest. By this movement, however, he uncovered an equal number of eggs on the other side. After several more moves, all with the same result, he concluded that there must be something wrong in the shape of the nest. He therefore changed its shape, making it much longer and not near so wide. Having again

placed the hen upon it, he perceived that a large number of eggs in front of her were uncovered. He therefore took her by the neck and drew her forward upon those eggs. By this act, however, he left an equal number of eggs uncovered behind her. He therefore took her by the tail and drew her back upon these eggs. By this movement, however, the eggs in front of her were left uncovered as before. Having repeated these movements several times, always with the same result, he stood for a moment, with arms akimbo, looking sadly upon the little hen and the monstrous nest. Then, in utter desperation, he looked the hen imploringly in the face, and cried: "Speck! Speck! spread yourself!" And thus will it be with us, if we attempt to make one night, or even one whole day and night, cover all the events that the Bible makes it cover. If we grant time enough for one thing, we have no time at all left for anything else. Our little hen can never be so spread as to make her cover so many eggs. The champions of the Bible may cry, "Humbug! Infidelity," etc., but, so far from removing the difficulties with which this whole story is beset, these cries simply prove the impotence and the ill manners of the desperate men who use them. Even Kuertz, one of the ablest champions the Bible ever had, speaking of certain matters involved in this story, frankly exclaims: "We candidly confess that our faith will not reach so far as this."

In order, so far as possible, to obviate the difficulties of the fabulous march in question, certain champions of the Bible assume that Egypt did not then extend to the Red Sea, and that, consequently, the Hebrews may have been out of Egypt when only a few miles from Rameses, the place from which they started. These champions, however, fail to tell us what country it was, which, upon their assumption, must have intervened between Egypt and the Red Sea. They would like to place Rameses within a few miles of the Red Sea, and thus save the necessity of assuming an unnamed intervening country.

This, however, they cannot do, since it is known that Rameses was situated on the Nile, which, in no place, is less than eighty miles from the Red Sea, and which, from the nature of the country, could never have been any nearer than it now is.

Wherever the eastern boundary of Egypt may have been, it is now commonly held that, although the Hebrews marched out of Egypt on "the self-same day," on the eve of which they ate the first paschal lamb, they were three days in reaching the Red Sea. This would have required a daily march of at least twenty-six miles; and, by so vast a mixed multitude, all loaded with plunder, no such march could ever have been performed. Their journey was over a burning desert, and even if the people could have made the journey in so short a time, the sheep certainly could not. Indeed, as every drover knows, so immense a number of domestic animals could never have been driven, in a single body, over such a country at all.

I shall first show that it was utterly impossible for the Hebrews and their live stock to reach the Red Sea in so short a period as three days. I shall then show that it was equally impossible for them to subsist in such a desert for a longer period than three days. Having shown these things, I will have shown that no such march, of so immense a multitude of people and of cattle, was ever performed at all.

Tischendorf, and certain other champions of the Bible, admit that the Hebrews could not possibly have reached the Red Sea in three days. These champions, therefore, are of the opinion that, although to small parties well mounted the distance was regarded as only a three days' journey, the Hebrews were necessarily many more days in passing over it; that they doubtless rested whole days at a time. This would indeed have given them more time in which to perform the journey, but it would have fearfully increased the time during which they must have subsisted upon that terrible desert. In Ex. xii, 39, we read: "And

they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened: because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual." In order to be thus "brought forth out of Egypt," the dough in question must, of necessity, have been carried beyond the boundaries of that country. This dough, too, was evidently the only food the people had in that first part of their journey. But, in such a climate, dough becomes putrid and totally unfit for food long before the end of three days. It is evident, then, that, even if the people had started with more than three days' rations of dough, they could not, after the expiration of that many days, have used it for food. If, then, they were more than three days performing that portion of their journey, upon what did they subsist? And how did the immense flocks and herds subsist, for which no food at all was carried, and which could have found little, if any, herbage to eat upon that desert?

In London the births average one every four minutes, and the deaths one every six minutes. Other things being equal, then, the Hebrews, who in numbers were just about equal to the inhabitants of London, must have had about the same number of births and deaths daily that the Londoners now have. This estimate would give us for every day, among the Hebrews, about four hundred births and nearly three hundred deaths. As I have already shown, however, the birth rate among these wonderful people must have been several times greater than is that among any people now upon the earth. This very high birth rate, too, must have been for a time considerably increased by the many abortions or untimely births brought on by the numerous accidents and the fearful hardships to which the women were unavoidably exposed during so sudden and so terrible a flight, for which they were totally unprepared. I think, therefore, that no one will regard my estimate as an extravagant one when I put the number

of births among the Hebrews during each of those terrible days at one thousand. This would have been an average of about two births every three minutes; and since so vast a moving mass could not possibly have stopped for each case, all the women who were involved in these cases must, of necessity, have either performed the painful duty of bringing forth their children while being carried right onward through the suffocating dust and the withering heat, or else have stopped by the roadside, brought forth their children in haste, and then been hurried forward on the backs of their friends to their proper places in the ranks.

On our present estimate, there must have been at any one time, at least twenty thousand women who were unable to march upon foot by reason of recent or of approaching childbirth. All these women, together with hundreds of thousands of young children, cripples, sick persons, etc., in addition to the dough-troughs, the clothing, etc., must have been carried on the backs of the young and the strong.

The death rate, too, must have been fearfully increased by the exhausting fatigue of the forced marches, the suffocating clouds of dust that must have constantly filled the air, the withering heat of a tropical desert, the wasting hunger and thirst, the loss of sleep, the thousand ills to which so vast a mixed multitude, totally unused to travel, must inevitably have been exposed, when thus thrust out, without any preparation at all, and forced to flee, with so great speed, across so extensive and so fearfully inhospitable a region. Under such circumstances, the deaths would undoubtedly have greatly outnumbered the births. Indeed, since, during the whole forty years of their wanderings in the wilderness, the numbers of the Hebrews were not materially increased, their birth rate and their death rate, during that entire period, must, on an average, have been about equal. It would evidently be a very moderate estimate, therefore, to put the number of deaths

during each of the terrible days of that wonderful flight at three thousand, or one for every one thousand of the entire population. Such a death rate would be regarded as extremely light even among veteran soldiers when similarly exposed. Indeed, while marching over the same desert, Napoleon's veterans, although comparatively well equipped, suffered a mortality of one thousand per cent. greater than this. Let the number of deaths among the Hebrews, at the time in question, have been what they may, however, the dead must, of necessity, have been carried right on until a halt was made, or else hastily buried by the road-side, by small parties who fell out for that purpose, and who afterwards hurried forward and resumed their proper places in the ranks. Besides all these things, the vast flocks and herds had to be cared for, and, for a time, these must have been unruly and troublesome. Under all these circumstances, could those people have possibly performed a journey of over eighty miles in three days? And could they, for a longer period than three days, have possibly subsisted, in such a desert, upon the little "dough which they brought forth out of Egypt?"

As to water, few of the people could have carried any at all. Not being accustomed to traveling, few of them would have been provided with water skins, and the heavy earthen jars, which they used at home for water vessels, were totally unfit to carry water in on long journeys. Admitting, however, that the people did carry water with them, could they, in addition to all their other enormous burden, have possibly carried enough to last for more than three days? What, then, did they do after this supply was exhausted? At the present day, even small parties of travelers, when crossing that desert, are generally, if not always, accompanied by trains of camels bearing loads of water. When the Hebrews reached the Red Sea, they found neither food nor drink, and yet they had to make a forced night march of over twenty miles through the miry bed of the sea. How did they manage to survive during

that dreadful night, and during the next three days and nights, while they wandered in the wilderness of Shur, and "found no water?"

Every military man knows that an army of one hundred thousand men, making a forced march over ever so fertile a country, would soon perish of hunger, if they did not scatter out all over the country and supply themselves, or send out many large foraging parties to collect provisions, and bring them into the camps. How, then, could three millions of men, women, and children, with at least an equal number of domestic animals, have possibly managed to subsist, while marching, for many days at a time, all in one compact body, over a desert country in which no provisions could have been found, even if foraging parties had been sent out in search of them? The people alone would have required enough food every day to load three hundred such freight cars as are now in use upon our railroads. And does not every intelligent person know that no such supply could ever have been obtained in such a country?

It has generally been assumed by the champions of the Bible that, during the month and a half that the Hebrews spent wandering in the desert before the sending of manna, they subsisted upon the flesh of their flocks and herds. This assumption, however, does not appear to be well founded, since, at the close of this very period, the people cried for flesh to eat, and God sent them quails. If for a month and a half they had been feasting upon beef and mutton, and if they had still a supply of these kinds of flesh, they surely would not have made the cry they did, and God surely would not have sent them quails as he did. Admitting, however, that the assumption be correct, let us see what it involves.

It is a well-known fact that, when traveling and living out of doors, people require much more food than they do when settled down and living in houses. The Hebrews, then, during the time of which we are speaking, must have

required an unusually large supply of food. Under such circumstances, and having no other food, they would certainly have required a sheep or a goat each day for every thirty persons, or a beef for every three hundred persons. This would have required a daily allowance of one hundred thousand sheep, or of ten thousand beeves; and, at this rate, there would have been consumed during the month and a half in question four million five hundred thousand sheep, or four hundred and fifty thousand beeves. Assuming that one-half of the flesh consumed was beef, and the other half mutton, there must have been consumed two million two hundred and fifty thousand sheep, and two hundred and twenty-five thousand beeves, or two million four hundred and seventy-five thousand domestic animals in all. This would have been nearly five-sixths of the entire three million, which, without any proper data upon which to base our assumption, we have assumed that the Hebrews brought with them out of Egypt. Since, however, it would be unreasonable to suppose that these people in so short a time would have so nearly consumed their entire stock of domestic animals, we are forced to the conclusion that our assumption of only three millions of these animals, as the original number, is far too small. Indeed, so far as I can learn, the domestic animals in all pastoral countries outnumber the inhabitants at least ten to one. This would give us at least thirty million as the number of these animals, brought by the Hebrews out of Egypt. If, then, we put the number of these animals at only ten millions, or three and one-third times that of the people, our estimate is certainly an extremely low one. Even this low estimate, however, which we will now adopt, will greatly modify some of the calculation which we have already made on the assumption that there were only three millions of these animals. But how could ten million cattle, sheep, and goats, all in one compact body, have found food and water for forty-five days on the deserts over which they were being driven? There are not now,

and from the nature of the country there never could have been, in those regions, any streams or pools of water of sufficient size to have been of any service to flocks and herds so immense.

Besides all this, in very hot weather, and especially when breathing much dust, sheep, in particular, give out and soon perish, unless they get water after every eight or ten miles of travel. Every person accustomed to the driving of sheep, in a hot and dry climate, knows this to be a fact. It is also a fact, well known to all stock drovers, that when so many as three thousand sheep or cattle are driven rapidly over very dusty roads, in hot weather, many of them often perish from suffocation. Even so small droves as these, therefore, often have to be divided and driven in two or three separate bodies. Indeed, in California, where, for nine months in the year, the ground is hot and dry, the great sheep raisers, even when not driving them, rarely attempt to keep more than four thousand sheep in one body. How, then, could ten million or more of cattle, sheep, and goats have been driven, all in one compact body, under the scorching sun, and over the fearfully dry and dusty roads of the African and the Arabian deserts? Every shepherd and cattle drover knows that not even the one-hundredth part of the number of live stock in question ever could have been, or ever were, driven over those deserts, in the manner described in the Bible.

The intense heat and the fearful clouds of dust from which, while moving, they could never escape, would have so greatly increased the thirst of those millions of cattle and other animals, that, without water at least once a day, they would all soon have perished. But where, on any part of the deserts over which they are said to have been driven, could they have obtained water once a day? Indeed, where could they have found it at all? In order to all drink at once from a stream four rods wide, they would have had to pack it with their bodies, from bank to bank,

for at least twenty-five miles of its length. In this case, however, what must have been the condition of the water when it reached those lowest down in the stream? With twenty-five miles of its length crowded with cattle, furious from thirst, fighting, splashing, stirring up the mud from the bottom, and filling the water with their own filth, could the stream, in its lower part, have been anything else than a sewer of the most loathsome filthiness? And does not every stock raiser know that cattle and sheep will perish of thirst before they will drink water which has been thus befouled? In the country over which the Hebrews are said to have passed, there are no streams so large as I have supposed, and, in case of any smaller stream, the condition of the water would have been still worse. If only ten thousand of those animals could have drunk at once, it would have taken about four days and nights for them all to get a drink. So great a number as this could not possibly have drunk at once at any watering place in all that country; and yet, if they could, those in the rear would have been perishing of thirst before they reached the water, and those in the front would have again been sorely in need of water, long before those in the rear were done drinking. Besides this, as every drover knows, numbers so immense of intensely thirsty animals, in their frantic efforts to reach the water, would have surged furiously onward from behind, and forced those in front through the water and out of it, without letting them drink, or else would have piled upon one another, and thus have crushed to death, or suffocated, tens of thousands at a time of the weaker ones. In the great valleys of the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, I have often known great numbers of sheep to be suffocated in this way, although, in each case, there were only a few thousands struggling to reach the water, which was abundant.

In Ex. xv, 27, we read: "And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and three score and ten palm-trees; and they encamped there by the waters." From the

context, we learn that it was at these twelve wells that the Hebrews spent nearly all of the first month and a half after their departure from Egypt. During that whole time, then, each of these wells must have supplied water for two hundred and fifty thousand people, and, also, for nearly one million cattle, sheep, and goats. So far as I know, the champions of the Bible have never claimed that these were anything more than ordinary wells, supplied with one good water bucket each. But, supposing that each of these wells contained the requisite amount of water, could that water have been drawn up in a single bucket, and distributed to so immense a body of people and of domestic animals? For drinking, cooking, washing, and all other purposes, the people would certainly have required half a gallon a day to each individual. This would have required a daily supply of one hundred and twenty-five thousand gallons from each well; and, to have drawn this, would have required twenty-nine three-gallon bucketfuls a minute, for both day and night. After it was drawn, the water from these wells had to be carried, in such vessels as the people had brought with them, to all parts of the camp, which, of necessity, must have been several miles in extent each way. Since none of these vessels could have been large, several hundreds of thousands of water carriers must have visited the wells every day. Fifty thousand to each well would be a moderate estimate. Allowing that these water carriers worked both day and night, they would have had less than two seconds each at the well. How, then, could at least six times as much more water have been drawn, at the same time, from these same wells, and distributed, in these same small vessels, to many square miles of cattle, sheep, and goats? To anyone who has ever seen armies or large emigrant trains watering, this whole story becomes monstrously absurd, and utterly incredible. Had no numbers been given, the reader would never have inferred, from the general tenor of the story, that Moses had with him more than three or four thousand

people with their numerous flocks and herds. Very few portions of the story can possibly be reconciled with the immense numbers which the author has given us.

As I have already said, there are not now, and, from the nature of the country, there never could have been, any large streams of water in the desert regions over which the Hebrews are said to have wandered. Indeed, so far as I can learn, there are no streams at all, in those regions, and the Bible does not represent the Hebrews as finding streams of any kind. Both the people and the cattle must have been supplied with water from such wells as were to be found in that country. But several hundreds of such wells would have been required for numbers so immense. It is true that the Bible has God, on three separate occasions, miraculously provide water for the people. No such provision, however, seems to have been made for the flocks and the herds. The most remarkable of these three cases of miraculous provision of water is said to have occurred near Mount Sinai, where the Hebrews are represented as remaining for a year or more. In this case, Moses is represented as causing water to gush forth from a rock, simply by striking upon the rock with a wooden rod. The rock, from which this miraculous supply of water is said to have been thus obtained, still lies in its place near Mount Sinai, and is yearly visited by great numbers of pious pilgrims. By those who have examined it, it is described as a loose block of red granite, only eighteen feet in its greatest dimension. Had it been hollow, and filled with water, the supply would not have lasted the Hebrews one hour. The orifice, from which the water is said to have flowed, is described as being about four inches in diameter, and eighteen inches in depth. Before this truly insignificant orifice, the devout Jew, Christian, or Mohammedan, reverently uncovers his head, and feels himself to be, if not in the direct presence of God himself, at least in the presence of the visible traces of God's miraculous power. The ungodly skeptic, however,

moved more by curiosity than by piety, irreverently approaches this orifice, with his hat on, and feels himself to be merely in the presence of a small hole made in the rock by some pious impostor, the marks of whose chisel are still visible on the sides and the bottom of the orifice.

From such an orifice as this, scarce water enough could have flowed to supply the people alone. Just fancy the entire city of London, or three cities each the size of New York, as being suddenly deprived of all water except what the people could obtain and carry away, in cups, bottles, and other small vessels, from a single small spring or orifice like the one in question. Would not the space for a mile or more around the orifice be so packed with people that thousands would perish before they could reach the water at all? Would not the stream or reservoir, from which they dipped water, have had to be several miles in length in order that all might approach daily and obtain a supply? So must it have been with the equally immense number of Hebrews. How, then, did the cattle get water here, and in the other equally waterless regions in which the Hebrews are said to have encamped?

In addition to all these difficulties in regard to water, how could flocks and herds so immense have found pasturage in such a country? Had the pasturage been very fine, half a square rod a day might have been sufficient for each animal. Even this small allowance, however, would have required, for all, a daily allowance of nearly fifty square miles, or an area of land ten miles long and five miles wide. On the deserts in question, however, all the scant pasturage on several hundred square miles would have been required each day. Every traveler, who has ever passed over the country in question, knows that the only spots that ever could have produced good pasturage are small valleys and rocky ravines, into which large flocks and herds could never have entered. Admitting, however, that the pasturage was good, could so many domestic animals, all in one body, have obtained food? While traveling,

they would have had to scatter out many miles from the road, and then the hundreds of thousands of stronger ones, going in front, would have trodden into the earth and ruined all the grass that they themselves did not consume. The weaker ones, therefore, going in the rear, would not have been able to obtain any food at all. Besides this, even on the best of pasture-lands, they could not have been driven far enough from the road, in the evening, for all to get food, and then have time to return to the road to resume their journey, in the morning. While not traveling, the case would have been still worse; since they would then have had to be brought in every day to some well or other watering-place, and then driven out farther and farther every time, as the pasturage near the watering-place became exhausted. In a few days, they would have had to go from thirty to forty miles from the watering-place to find any pasturage at all. And if it would have been thus on the best of pasture-lands, how would it have been on the arid deserts over which the Hebrews are said to have wandered? If this whole story be credible, what is there incredible in the tales of Gulliver, of Sinbad the Sailor, or of Jack the Giant-killer?

In regard to the crossing of the Red Sea, we also find certain grave difficulties which the champions of the Bible should, if possible, explain away. In Ex. xiv, 21, 22, we read: "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong *east* wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left." Now every person who has ever noticed the trend of the shore of that armlet of the Red Sea, knows that an "*east* wind" could never have driven the waters back out of that armlet. Such a wind would have done more harm than good. It would have driven the waters in from the great body of the sea and rendered them deeper in the

place at which the Hebrews are said to have crossed. Only a *northwest* wind could have driven the waters back out of that armlet. Admitting, however, that the waters were thus driven back by an "east wind," or by a wind from any other direction, could those same waters have still been present, standing as "a wall" to the people, "on their right hand, and on their left?" If it was the "east wind" that caused the waters to stand up thus like walls on either hand, how did the Hebrews manage to cross the sea directly in the face of that wind? In order to have had such an effect upon so large a body of water, the violence of that wind would have surpassed that of the most terrible tornadoes ever known. And would not such a wind have carried the Hebrews and their cattle away like so many feathers? The champions of the Bible may contend that it was the direct power of God, and not the "east wind," that thus divided the waters, and caused them to stand like walls on either hand. The Bible, however, expressly declares that the result in question was produced by the agency of the "east wind," and, in the whole affair, claims nothing as miraculous but the raising of so mighty a wind. And what right have the champions of the Bible to claim as a miracle that for which the Bible sets up no such claim?

Admitting, however, that, by some means or another, the waters of the sea were thus driven back or divided, the sandy bottom was bound to be still thoroughly saturated with water, and was bound to be so beaten up by the trampling of the first few thousands of men, or of cattle, that crossed, that those following after would have been inextricably mired and lost. Under these circumstances, it would seem that God might safely have omitted that extremely mean trick, of which the Bible says he was guilty, of stealing the linch-pins from the wheels of the Egyptian chariots. He is represented as doing this in order to cause the chariot wheels to come off in the sea. In so deep mire, however, the chariot wheels could have

been of no use to the Egyptians, and hence might just as well not have been removed.

In the seventeenth chapter of Exodus, we learn that, almost immediately after they had crossed the Red Sea, the Hebrews were well armed, and were able to overcome in battle the powerful forces of the warlike Amalekites. Will the champions of the Bible be so kind as to inform us whence the Hebrews obtained those arms? Did they arm themselves before leaving Egypt? Would the Egyptians have permitted them to do this? And if, when leaving Egypt, they had all been thus well armed, would over six hundred thousand Hebrew warriors have been so terribly frightened, as the Bible represents them as having been, by the approach of Pharaoh, whose hastily assembled army could scarcely have contained one-third of that number? If, on the other hand, the people, when leaving Egypt, were not armed, could they, in so short a time, and while fleeing for their lives over a desert country, have possibly either purchased or manufactured so many arms? If not, whence were those arms obtained?

In the twenty-sixth chapter of Exodus, we learn that, among a vast number of other materials, used in the constructing of the tabernacle, there was a large amount of "fine-twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet" cloths, such as were used only by the most wealthy and the most highly civilized people of that time. Whence, then, did the Hebrews obtain these fine cloths? Could they, while wandering in the desert, have either manufactured these articles or purchased them of the rude and almost naked natives? If not, must they not have borrowed these things of their confiding Egyptian neighbors, and then, by God's order, have absconded with them, as they did with the clothing and the jewelry which God had them borrow and never return? What say the champions of the Bible?

From various passages, we learn that, soon after the crossing of the Red Sea, the Hebrews were all living in tents, of which at least three hundred thousand must have

been required. Whence were these tents obtained, and how were they carried? Could the people, while yet in Egypt, have all been provided with tents? Had they any time to provide such things? Could they all, at one time, have obtained enough material to make so immense a number of tents? Could these tents have been borrowed of the Egyptians, and carried, with all the other plunder, on the shoulders of men? Would the Egyptians, who nearly all lived in houses, have had so many tents to lend? Could these tents, in so short a time, and in such a country, have been either manufactured, or purchased from the natives?

In various places, we learn that, on several different occasions, Moses called the entire Hebrew nation together “unto the door of the tabernacle,” to hear from him the words of the Lord. But how could three million of people have come together thus, all at one time, “unto the door of the tabernacle?” As most of you doubtless already know, the tabernacle was only about fifteen feet in width, and the door, which was in one end of it, occupied only a portion of this width. Only about ten persons could have stood abreast in front of the whole end of the tabernacle. Drawn up in this order, however, with eighteen inches between the ranks, the rear of the congregation would have been over eighty-five miles from the door of the tabernacle, and comparatively few of the people could have heard the words spoken by Moses.

It may be claimed, however, by the champions of the Bible, that it was at the door of the court of the tabernacle, or rather in front of the whole end of this court, that the people on the occasions in question, were wont to assemble. This court was an inclosure which surrounded the tabernacle on all sides, and which was seventy-five feet in width. In front of the end of this court, about forty persons could have stood abreast. Drawn up, however, with even this extended front, the rear of the congregation would still have been over twenty-one miles from the

speaker. This order, then, would evidently not have done. Placing eight hundred abreast would have brought the rear rank within only a little more than one mile from the speaker. This is probably the most convenient order in which they could have been drawn up, and yet over half of them would still have been over half a mile from the door of the tabernacle, and entirely beyond the sound of the speaker's voice. Could it, then, even in this most favorable case, have been truthfully said that they all came together "unto the door of the tabernacle," and that Moses spake unto "all the congregation?" Fancy, if you can, the entire population of London, or of at least three cities each the size of New York, as being all collected, in a few minutes, at the door of a very small church, and as all listening to the harangue of a single speaker. Then, perhaps, you may be enabled to believe this whole monstrously incredible story.

As I have already stated, Moses is said to have frequently addressed the entire congregation of Israel. His last address of this kind deserves special notice. It was delivered just before his death, and when he was one hundred and twenty years old. It occupies twenty-eight chapters of the Book of Deuteronomy, and must have required at least five hours in its delivery. Moses must, indeed, have been a wonderful man, if, notwithstanding the natural feebleness of so great an age, he made himself distinctly heard, during the entire delivery of so prodigious a speech, by the entire three million Hebrews, many of whom, from necessity, must have been drinking in his words from a distance of over half a mile. Every prominent public speaker knows that it would be utterly impossible for any man of the present time, if speaking thus in the open air, to make himself heard, during even a short address, by thirty thousand persons, all on one side of him. Is it at all credible, then, that the aged Moses ever, during a five hours' speech, made himself heard by a hundred such congregations, similarly placed?

Let us now notice the size of the camp occupied by the Hebrews. In regard to this matter, there is, among Bible critics, a great diversity of opinions. The Bible gives us no data from which the size of that camp can be certainly determined. There are certain limits, however, below which its dimensions could not have fallen. Each family seems to have occupied a separate tent. Of necessity, then, there must have been, in all, at least three hundred thousand tents of sufficient capacity to constitute a dwelling-place for ten persons, together with all their household goods, their stores of provisions, etc. On the outside of each of these tents, which must have been quite large ones, there must also have been a small spot of ground upon which to build the fire, to store fuel, etc. Between all the rows of tents, in both directions, there must also have been streets of sufficient width to enable hundreds of thousands of persons to pass and repass upon them daily. In the center of the camp, around the tabernacle, there seems to have also been an immense public square, in which, when occasion required, the entire nation could assemble at one time. Taking all these things into their calculations, many of the ablest Bible critics hold that the camp or cloth city in question must have been at least twelve miles square. As every military man knows, this space would have been inconveniently small. I will assume, however, that the camp in question was only eight miles square, or four-ninths of the size assigned to it by the writers above mentioned. This area then, would be about as much crowded as would be the City of New York, if, with only her present accommodations, her population were sixteen times greater than it now is. To have crowded the Hebrews more than this, would certainly have been unreasonable. Assuming, therefore, that the extremely small area of eight miles square constituted the size of the camp, let us see what had to be done daily by the priests and the people.

In Deut. xxiii, 12-14, we learn that the Hebrews were required to go beyond the limits of the camp to attend to

the ordinary calls of nature. Each individual must have had at least one such call every day; and those who lived near the center of the camp must, on each occasion, have walked four miles and back. Those persons, then, who had half a dozen such calls in a day, must have walked nearly fifty miles a day to attend to these calls alone. Those who could not, on each of these occasions, walk beyond the limits of the camp, must, of necessity, have sent out their excrementitious matter in the hands of their friends or of their servants. At one time, during the day, there must have been about one hundred thousand men, women, and children, out just beyond the limits of the camp, attending to these unavoidable calls. So vast a mixed multitude all thus occupied, upon the open plain, must have presented quite a picturesque scene.

I am aware that certain champions of the Bible assume that only the soldiers were required, on the occasions in question, to go beyond the limits of the camp. This assumption is founded upon the fact that, in the thirteenth verse of the chapter to which I have referred, the soldiers are required to carry upon their weapons certain little paddles with which to bury their own excrement. In the next verse, however, we read: "For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp to deliver thee; . . . therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no uncleanness in thee, and turn away from thee." From this passage, and from others which I might quote, it is evident that the regulations requiring the calls of nature to be attended to beyond the limits of the camp, applied to the whole people, and not to the soldiers alone. Had these regulations, so essential to health and cleanliness, if not to decency, applied to none but the soldiers, the camp would have been in almost as filthy a condition as if no such regulations had been established at all. I do not think that the Lord would ever have ventured to take a second walk in the midst of such a camp. The object intended to be secured by the regulations in question could have been

secured only by applying the regulations to the entire people. But could so many people, all situated thus in one camp, ever have been able to carry out any such regulations? You all know that they could not.

Besides all this, the ashes and everything else that could, in any way, have detracted from the cleanliness of the camp, had also to be carried beyond the limits of the camp. For all the water, too, which the people used, they had to go beyond the limits of the camp; and, since the water could have been on only one side of the camp, those farthest from it must have had to walk eight miles and back every time they went for water. This must have been extremely inconvenient. All the wood, too, for fuel and other purposes, must have been brought from the places in which it grew, to the camp. From the nature of the country, there never could have been any such things as forests in the regions over which the Hebrews are said to have wandered. At best, there never could have been much more timber, in those regions, than exists in them now: a few stunted trees, growing here and there, in places sheltered by rocks. In the most favorable localities, all the wood within a radius of thirty miles, would hardly have lasted the Hebrews ten days. When they remained several years in one place, they must have brought their wood from a distance of a hundred miles or more, and brought it, too, on their own shoulders, or on the backs of asses.

In Lev. iv, 11, 12, we read: "And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung, even the whole bullock, shall he carry forth without the camp, unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire." All of this work had to be done by Aaron or one of his sons. No other persons were allowed to do these things; and, since the tabernacle, at which the bullock was killed, stood in the middle of the camp, the officiating priest had to carry "even the whole bullock,"

upon his own shoulders, to a place at least four miles from the tabernacle. But how often did he perform this wonderful feat?

After carefully considering all the sacrifices that were required, we cannot reasonably estimate the number offered each day at less than two hundred bullocks, four hundred rams, and six hundred young pigeons, and other small offerings. Allowing ten hours to the work day, this would give us, for each hour, twenty bullocks, forty rams, and sixty smaller offerings of various kinds. In all, there must have been an average of two offerings every minute. All these things, too, had to be offered upon one altar; and, if I rightly understand the language of the Bible, each one of them had to be offered separately by a single priest, although the other two priests might assist him in preparing it for the altar. Assuming, however, that, in some way, all three of the priests officiated at the same time, could they have possibly offered so many sacrifices? Would not the priest who carried the carcasses out of the camp have had a peculiarly hard time? Would he not have had to walk over two thousand miles every day? Would he not have had to walk half this distance, too, with the carcass of a bullock or of a ram upon his shoulders? Could three hundred men have done all the work that was required of these three priests?

Besides all these things, whence did the Hebrews, while in the desert, obtain their daily requirement of four hundred or more doves, or young pigeons, for sacrifices? These birds could not, like the cattle, have been driven out of Egypt. If, then, they were brought out of Egypt at all, they must have been carried in cages. But could the people, in addition to their other enormous burdens, have carried so many birds, together with their appropriate foods? And if the birds were not brought from Egypt at all, how were they obtained in the desert?

For their own use and that of their families, the priests were to have the skins of all the burnt offerings and all

the shoulders and breasts of the peace offerings, and these offerings, as we have already seen, must have amounted to several hundreds every day. In addition to this liberal supply for themselves and their families, the priests alone were to eat in the holy place (Num. xviii, 10), all of the sin offerings, and trespass offerings, except the fat (Lev. iv, 31-35), and all of the meat offerings, except one handful of each (Lev. ii, 2). The sin offerings were very numerous, those for the single sin, committed by the women, of bearing children, amounting to at least four hundred every day. Each of these offerings consisted of a lamb, a kid, or a pair of young pigeons. In addition, therefore, to the ample supplies of meats which he had to eat with his family, and in addition to his share of all the trespass offerings and meat offerings, each priest was bound to eat daily at least one hundred and thirty-three and one-third lambs, kids, birds, etc.

Under these circumstances, it was well that the priests had so great a variety of meats. Had their allowance consisted all of one kind of meat they could hardly have "worried down" so great quantities. Indeed, even as it was, they did on one occasion fail to eat their entire rations. Having, no doubt, each already eaten on that day over a dozen bullocks, over one hundred and thirty lambs, kids, etc., and other kinds of food in proportion, their appetites began to fail them toward evening, and hence they *burnt* a goat which they should have *eaten*. From the lank appearance of their stomachs, however, or from the *sheepish* expression of their countenances, Moses suspected that they had not eaten the goat. He, therefore, "diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt; and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron, saying, Wherefore have ye not *eaten* the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it to you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before Jehovah! Ye should indeed have *eaten* it in the

holy place, as I commanded " (Lev. x, 16-20). In palliation of this grave offense of himself and his sons, in not eating the goat in question, poor old Aaron pleaded the fact that his two elder sons, Nadab and Abihu, had been slain that day by God himself, and that the grief occasioned by this great calamity had impaired the appetites of himself and his two remaining sons.

For want of time, I can barely glance at a few of the many remaining absurd and incredible teachings that are to be found in this monstrous story. Among other things, we are taught that the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe made it a sin for a pure and loving wife to bear children—a sin for the pardoning of which he uniformly charged a lamb, a kid, a pair of young pigeons, or something else of the kind. His pardons and his blessings always had to be bought. We are further taught that this infinitely great and glorious power regarded a woman as unclean just twice as long after the birth of a female child as after a male. We are still further taught that this infinitely great and glorious power took up its abode among this single tribe—the Hebrews—and devoted almost its entire time to their affairs; that it had a nose, with which it was wont to sniff up, with great gusto, the fumes of the beef, the mutton, etc., which were roasted for its especial benefit; that it had back parts, of which it made an indecent exposure to gratify the morbid curiosity of its own servant Moses; that it turned cook, and taught the priests how to prepare its food and their own; that it turned tailor and dressmaker, and taught the priests how to make bonnets, petticoats, etc., for themselves to wear; that it believed in witchcraft, and made laws for the killing of witches; that it sometimes made solemn promises under oath, and then violated them; that it turned detective, and taught the priests how to discover the guilt or the innocence of a woman charged with adultery, merely by making her drink dirty water; that it turned petty thief and stole the linchpins from the wheels of the Egyptian chariots; that it

turned juggler, and successfully competed, in feats of legerdemain, with the most skillful magicians of Egypt; that it encouraged slavery, polygamy, concubinage, and almost every other form of moral and social evil; that it believed the earth to be flat and stationary, the sky to be a solid structure, the day to be independent of the sun, etc.; that, in short, it was a person, in all its characteristics, resembling a man of that time.

If you believe all these things, you ought to be sure of heaven, since it is generally admitted that God never made ^h a fool and then damned him. If, however, you have too much common sense to believe all these things, you may as well prepare to be damned. I am already prepared.

LECTURE ELEVENTH.

THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE.

It is a well-known fact that all the religions of the world depend for the proof of their divine origin upon certain feats, or certain phenomena, usually called miracles. This is especially true of the Christian religion. Its ablest defenders claim no other proof of its divine origin. Take away its miracles, then, and this religion will at once disappear.

As now usually understood, a miracle is either an act which, from its nature or its magnitude, could not possibly be performed by human power, or a phenomenon which, for similar reasons, could not possibly result from the action of any of the laws of nature. In other words, a miracle is something the production of which either suspends or transcends the operations of the laws of nature. In short, it is something that, of necessity, proceeds from the individual action of an intelligent being who is himself independent of the laws of nature, and superior to them. In other words, a genuine miracle proves the existence of a personal God.

From all this, it is clear that the only difference between a Christian and an Infidel is that the former does, while the latter does not, believe that genuine miracles have ever been performed. Convince a Christian that no such miracles as are described in the Bible were ever performed, and you at once make him an Infidel. So, on the other hand, convince an Infidel that the miracles described in the Bible were all genuine, and you at once make him a Christian. In neither case has the will of the subject anything to do with his belief, or his unbelief. The whole matter depends upon evidence, or upon the want of evi-

dence. The man who believes does so simply because a sufficient amount of evidence has been brought to bear upon him to compel him to believe. His belief, therefore, cannot possibly involve any merit on his own part. So, on the other hand, the man who disbelieves does so simply because, from a want of sufficient evidence to convince his judgment, he is utterly unable to do otherwise. His unbelief, therefore, cannot possibly involve any demerit on his own part. The unbeliever, then, should not be condemned because of the weakness of the evidence adduced, in support of their religion, by the champions of Christianity.

Notwithstanding the unreasonableness of doing so, however, the believers in the Christian religion always have arrogated to themselves, solely because of their belief, special merit and special fitness for eternal happiness. On the other hand, they have always denounced unbelievers in their religion as totally unfitted, by that unbelief, for anything but the dungeon, the rack, and the stake in the present life, and eternal torments in the life to come. This horribly unjust discrimination, on the part of the believers in Christianity, in their own favor, and against the unbelievers in that religion, has done more than any other one cause to crush out free thought and honest investigation among men, to retard the advance of light and knowledge, and to promote hypocrisy, ignorance, and superstition.

I have given a concise definition of the word miracle as it is now generally understood. Anciently, however, it was synonymous with the word wonder. Then a miracle was simply something wonderful. We now, however, make a very marked distinction between the merely wonderful and the truly miraculous. While no intelligent person denies the existence of real wonders, comparatively few such persons believe in the existence of real miracles. It must be admitted, however, that things regarded as miraculous in one age, or by one people, may be regarded as merely

wonderful, or even as common-place, in another age, or by another people. Such are many of the feats of jugglers and magicians. To the ignorant and superstitious, these feats appear to be truly miraculous; to the comparatively intelligent, they appear to be truly wonderful; to the initiated, they appear to be mere common-place matters. The same is also true of the results of many scientific experiments. As instances, we might name the lighting of a fire with a drop of water, or with sparks from a man's nose; the converting of a cotton garment into its own weight of sugar, the converting of water into wine, and the causing of large pieces of iron to stand in the air without either visible or tangible support. To the ignorant, these things appear miraculous; to the educated, they do not appear even wonderful. Indeed, were Moses, Elijah, or any other of the reputed miracle performers of the Bible, to return to the earth, with all the power he ever possessed, he could not now possibly perform any feat that would pass among intelligent men as a real miracle.

In a single lecture I can, of course, notice only a few of the many so-called miracles of the Bible. The creation, the deluge, the exodus, and the conception of Jesus without a human father, are, undoubtedly, the four most noted miracles, or rather extravagances, of the Bible, and yet, since these are all fully noticed in other lectures, I will give them no further notice now, but will devote the present lecture to a consideration of other important and yet minor miracles.

Among the miraculous events, said to have occurred soon after the deluge, was the wonderful repast, eaten at the table of the old patriarch, Abraham, by three angels, or rather by the three personal Gods that constituted the congress or corporation called Elohim. Those three persons are said to have had the forms of men, and to have eaten heartily of meat, bread, milk, and other substantial articles of food. A question, therefore, naturally arises in

regard to the nature of the bodies in which those three persons made their appearance. As now taught by the entire Christian Church, angels, and all other celestial intelligences, are pure spirits, being totally destitute of anything like material bodies. Of necessity, however, such beings would be totally invisible, inaudible, intangible—in short, totally incapable of becoming known to us through our only avenue of knowledge, the mediumship of our physical senses, seeing, hearing, feeling, etc. No object can possibly be visible unless it either emits rays of light itself, or reflects the rays that fall upon it from some luminous body. In either of these cases, however, it must, of necessity, be a material body. So, in order to produce sound, and to thus make itself known to us through our sense of hearing, an object must, of necessity, be capable of producing vibrations in the air, and this can be done only by a material body. So also of the remaining physical senses. They cannot possibly take cognizance of anything but material objects and their various properties.

It is evident, then, that the three persons in question, who were both seen and heard, must have possessed material bodies ; and since they were capable of walking, talking, growing weary, becoming rested, growing hungry and thirsty, and of eating, drinking, digesting, etc., their bodies must, of necessity, have possessed all the organs, and performed all the functions, of the human body. Whence, then, did those bodies come? Had they always existed, or were they only assumed, temporarily, for that particular occasion? If they had always existed, must not all other heavenly beings have also possessed material bodies? If, on the other hand, they were manufactured and put on, like garments, for that one occasion alone, how were they so quickly made, and what became of them when their present possessors were done with them? If, like the bodies of men, they were formed by the unchangeable action of the previously existing laws of nature, then, like

the bodies of men, they were evidently natural bodies, and there was nothing miraculous about them. Indeed, upon this hypothesis, those persons could not have been either more or less than men, acting as angels or messengers. In this case, the miracle entirely disappears.

If, however, the bodies in question were suddenly formed for that special occasion, whence did the material come of which they were composed, and by what power was it brought together into the form of those bodies? Did each person form his own body? If not, who formed it for him? And how did the body-maker, whoever he may have been, manage to seize hold of the various atoms of matter, and place them all in their proper positions in those bodies? Since we are not having the laws of nature operate in the case, the whole process must have been a mechanical one. But such a process could have been performed only by a person who already possessed a material body; and if, in this case, the body-maker himself possessed such a body, who made it for him; and who made that maker's body, and so on forever? Do you believe that any such bodies were ever thus instantaneously formed at all? If so, what became of those bodies? Did they go to heaven? If so, did the bread, the meat, the milk, etc., which they had just taken in, go to heaven also? If they did not go to heaven, did they slowly decay, as do the dead bodies of men, or did they, like the "Wonderful One-horse Shay," instantaneously dissolve into their original elements? And what became of the material of those bodies? Did it, like the material of that "Wonderful One-horse Shay," fall down all in a heap, when those bodies dissolved, or was every particle of it carried back to its original position? And what became of the food which those bodies contained? Did it all fall down in a heap, when the bodies dissolved, or was it carried back to Abraham's table? When considered in all its bearings, does not this story become utterly incredible?

In connection with this pretended miracle, we find that

of the raining of fire and brimstone upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. In regard to this latter affair, the question very naturally arises, whence came the brimstone that fell thus, like rain, upon those two unfortunate cities? Of necessity, it must have been either absolutely created there all out of nothing, or else brought together there from some other locality in which it already existed. If it was absolutely created there, then the Bible speaks falsely when it declares that God finished all his creative works in six days. If, however, on the other hand, it was brought together there from some other locality, then we have a right to ask by what means it was thus brought together. Of necessity, it must either have been carried together by mechanical means, such as material hands, or else drawn together by some kind of attraction. That it was carried together into such a position, I do not suppose that any one will claim. It must, then, have been drawn together by some kind of attraction. But what kind of attraction was it that thus drew together brimstone and nothing else? And how came that strange kind of attraction to be acting, at that particular time, in the air, over those two doomed cities, and nowhere else? Of necessity, that temporary attraction must have been the result of a direct creation for that special occasion. The direct creation of such a force, however, and its direct annihilation, after its object had been accomplished, are more incredible events than would have been the direct creation of the brimstone itself, and a thousand times more incredible than would be the declaration that the whole story was manufactured by an ancient Gulliver. It is a well-known fact that, like strength, weight, hardness, etc., attractive force is simply a condition. or property of matter; and that it cannot possibly exist except in connection with some form of matter. It is evident, then, that no such force, acting thus independently of matter, ever did exist in the air over Sodom, Gomorrah, or any other city. In other words, it is evident that the whole story is an absurd fable

In connection with this pretended miracle, we also find that of turning Lot's wife into a pillar of salt. This cruel and unnecessary transformation was certainly a very notable miracle, and yet the account of it is dashed off in only fifteen words, thus: "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." The author incidentally mentions this wonderful transformation as if it had been an ordinary event, and as if it had occurred as a matter of course. Lot and his daughter do not appear to have been, in the least, either surprised or grieved at Mrs. Lot's wonderful and unfortunate transformation. They left her standing there, and never went back to look after her. Indeed, they do not appear to have ever again even mentioned her name. And now, let me ask, if for so trivial an offense as that of looking back upon the burning city which she was leaving, so fearful a fate had actually befallen her, would not some further notice have been given to the affair? Since Lot and his daughters did not look back to see what had become of her, and since all the balance of the Sodomites were destroyed, who ascertained and reported the fact that she had been thus uncereemoniously reduced to her equivalent of chloride of sodium? Who tasted of her to be sure that she was salt? How long was it before she melted away, or was licked up by the cattle? When she became salt, did she still retain her original shape? If not, what shape did she assume, and how was it known that this differently-shaped object was Mrs. Lot at all? After she became a pillar of salt, what kept that pillar from tumbling down? What became of her clothes? Were they also changed to salt? Could the carbon, the oxygen, the nitrogen, the iron, etc., of which she was composed, have been changed into salt, which contains only two elements, chlorine and sodium? Does not every chemist know that no such transformation was ever made? Admitting, however, that it was made, did it cause Mrs. Lot any pain? If not, was there any punishment in it? To what extent did her transformation affect the salt mar-

ket? Was her commercial value increased or diminished by her transformation? If she had a soul, what became of it? Was it also changed to salt? If so, how much did it make? If not, was it sent to heaven or to hell? If to heaven, was she not richly rewarded for her disobedience? If to hell, was not this punishment enough for so trivial an offense without wreaking vengeance upon her dead body? If you can swallow this story as true history, what is to hinder you from swallowing a whale as you would an oyster? And how can any two of you who claim to be intelligent persons look each other in the face, and, without laughing, declare that you really do believe this monstrously ridiculous tale?

I will next notice the pretended miracle, said to have been performed by Moses and also by the magicians of Egypt, of changing a wooden rod into a living serpent, and the living serpent thus produced again into a wooden rod. If this feat was ever performed at all, it was certainly a very notable miracle. The wooden rod, as such, instantly ceased to exist, and, in its stead, and composed of its material, a living serpent instantly came into existence. In the twinkling of an eye the utterly unchangeable elements that entered into the composition of the wooden rod were changed into the entirely different and equally unchangeable elements that enter into the composition of a serpent. Nothing short of an absolutely creative power could ever have performed so wonderful a transformation. In order to be a real serpent at all, this serpent must, of necessity, have been composed, as other serpents are, of flesh, blood, bones, etc. Like all other serpents, it must, of necessity, have possessed eyes, ears, lungs, veins, arteries, nerves, digestive organs, etc. Each of these organs, too, must, of necessity, have performed in this serpent the same function that it performs in any other serpent. Like all other serpents, then, this serpent must, of necessity, have been capable of seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, smelling, eating, moving, thinking, loving, hating, fearing, etc. Like

all other serpents, too, it must, of necessity, have possessed sex, and have been of some particular species. Which was it, then, a male or a female, and what property of the wooden rod was it that tended to produce this sex rather than the other? And of what species was this serpent, and what property of the wooden rod was it that tended more to produce this species than it did to produce any other? Did any elements enter into the composition of the serpent which had not previously existed in the wooden rod? Did it derive from that wooden rod all the elements of its muscular strength, its animal life, and mental or thinking faculties? If not, whence did it derive them? Did God instantly create them, all out of nothing, and put them into the serpent? Can strength exist apart from some material object that is strong? Can animal life exist apart from some animal that lives? And can the power of thinking exist apart from something that thinks? Are not all these things mere conditions of matter, and do they not depend for their existence upon certain forms of organization? Could God, then, have made them separate from the serpent, and afterwards put them into it? And could Pharaoh's magicians have done the same? And if God thus created and put into the serpent elements which had never existed in the rod, then the serpent was not the rod at all. It was a newly created creature.

When this serpent was changed into a rod, what rod was it? Was it the same rod that Moses had thrown down, or was it a new one? Did not the rod which Moses threw down cease to exist the moment it was changed into a serpent? And could this same rod have again begun to exist, after the serpent, into which it had been changed, had ceased to exist? Could the rod which was changed into a serpent and the rod into which the serpent was changed have been one and the same rod, without having had a continuous existence as a rod? And if this existence was continuous, could the pretended serpent, which

constituted this rod during a portion of its continuous existence, have been anything more or less than the rod itself? So of the serpent. When the second rod was changed into a serpent, what serpent was it? Was it the same serpent into which the first rod had been changed? If it was not, what had become of that other serpent, and in what respect did the two serpents differ? If it was the same, could it remember its former self? Could it also remember the interim during which it existed only as a wooden rod? If, without losing its identity, a serpent could thus exist a portion of the time as a wooden rod, could not a man do the same? Is there anything incredible, then, in the Arabian tales which have men changed into dogs, horses, stones, etc? Did not this tale, like nearly all other similar tales, originate in Arabia? Be this as it may, however, what became of the muscular strength, the animal life, the mind, the appetite, and the passions of that serpent when it was changed into a wooden rod? Did all these things go into the rod? If they did, must not the rod have possessed muscular strength, animal life, mental faculties, appetites, and passions? In short, must not everything have been present in the rod that had previously been present in the serpent? Were not the rod and the serpent, of necessity, the very same thing under different forms of organization? And if a difference of organization is all the difference there is between a wooden rod and a serpent, what other difference can there be between a wooden rod, a serpent, or any other object, and a man?

Besides all these things, were the life, the strength, the appetites, the passions, the mental faculties, and all the other endowments of the second serpent identical with those of the first? If not, could the two serpents have been one and the same serpent? If they were identical, how had they been made to extend their identical existence over that period during which neither of the serpents had any existence? Could the two serpents have been the

same serpent without having both existed at the same time, and without having had a continuous existence? And did they both exist at the same time, and was that existence a continuous one? If so, then it is clear that the changing of the serpent into a wooden rod made no break in the serpent's continuous existence. Of necessity, the wooden rod must still have been a living serpent; the very same serpent that was supposed to have been changed into the rod, and the very same serpent, too, into which the rod was supposed to have been changed. In other words, it is clear that the rod was a rod all the time, and that the serpent was a serpent all the time, neither one of them having been changed into the other, and no miracle at all having really been performed.

When Moses had changed his rod into a serpent, and it had swallowed all the serpents into which the magicians had changed their rods, did it digest those serpents and excrete them from its body? If not, what became of them when it was again changed into a rod? Did they drop out of it, and again change into the rods of the magicians, or were they, too, changed, together with the serpent that swallowed them, into the rod of Moses? If this latter transformation took place, did these serpents, or did they not, add anything to the size and the weight of the rod of Moses? Finally, if these serpents had been permitted to remain serpents, could they, or could they not have propagated their species and become, in all respects, like serpents produced in the natural way?

When Moses changed his rod into a serpent, Pharaoh, for whose benefit the trick was performed, did not appear to be in the least surprised. He seemed to be well acquainted with the trick, and to show Moses that it was nothing new, and that it did not indicate, on the part of the performer, the possession of any supernatural powers, he instantly called in his magicians, who did not claim any such powers, and had them perform the same trick. They seemed to fully understand the trick, and, when required

to do so, promptly proceeded to perform it. If they had not already frequently performed the trick, and been certain of their power to perform it again, would they have thus so confidently undertaken to perform it? Would you, in the presence of a king, and of other great personages, undertake thus promptly to perform a trick which you never had performed, and of the mode of performing which you were entirely ignorant?

You may claim that, on this particular occasion, God gave these magicians power to do that which they had never before done, and which, without his aid, they never could have done. In setting up this claim, however, you directly contradict the Bible, which expressly declares that the magicians performed this trick by means of *their own enchantments*. If, then, you still insist upon the truth of this monstrous snake story, you are bound to admit that, by their own powers or enchantments, mere men could, and did, and consequently can yet, perform the genuine and truly astonishing miracle of changing dry wooden rods into living serpents as perfect, in all their parts, as are those produced by nature. How, then, do you know that, on the occasion in question, Moses was aided by divine power? May he not also have been merely a skillful magician, performing his feats by means of *his own enchantments*?

I will next notice the pretended miracle of turning all the waters of Egypt into blood. If this transformation was actually performed, as related, it was certainly a very notable miracle, and yet Pharaoh does not appear to have been in the least either surprised or alarmed at it. He appeared to fully understand the trick, and his magicians at once proceeded to perform it also. This they did, not by God's assistance, as Moses professed that he did, but by *their own enchantments*. You are bound to admit, then, that, by *their own powers*, mere men could, and did, and, consequently, can yet, perform genuine miracles; and, as a necessary consequence of this admission, you are bound

also to admit that the performance of the stupendous blood-making feat in question, by Moses, was no proof at all that he was aided by divine power.

Connected with this pretended miracle, we find a remarkable circumstance which the champions of the Bible ought to feel it incumbent upon themselves to explain. This is the fact that, after Moses, with God's assistance, had changed *all the waters* in Egypt into blood, the magicians immediately proceeded, by means of their own enchantments, to change these *very same waters* into blood; and the fact that, after Moses, by turning *all the waters* into blood, had caused *all the fish* in them to *die*, the magicians, by performing the *very same trick* upon the *very same water*, caused to *die a second time*, the *very same fish* that Moses had *already killed*. How could all this have been done? Could *blood* have been changed into *blood*, and could *dead fish* have been *killed*? And if all the waters of Egypt really had been thus doubly changed into blood, how many of the people of that country would have lived to tell the story? If all those waters were changed into blood at all, that blood must, of necessity, have been *blood*, genuine *blood*, such as is found only in the bodies of animals. Picture to yourself, then, for a moment, every river, lake, rill, etc., of a vast country filled with genuine *blood*, putrefying in the sun of a hot climate, and then, upon your honor, declare, if you can, that you really believe this monstrous bloody tale.

In connection with these two pretended miracles, we find that of causing countless myriads of frogs to come up, out of all the rivers and other waters of Egypt, and fill the entire land, even the bed-chambers, the ovens, and the dough troughs of the people. As in the former two cases, both sets of these jugglers successfully performed this truly astounding feat. Moses and Aaron, according to their own statements, performed it with God's assistance; the magicians, without an assistance at all. Stupendous

as this fact was, however, it does not appear to have occasioned the least surprise or alarm among the people.

In these three cases, we have the pitiful spectacle of your God, whom you arrogantly claim to be the infinite power that rules the universe, turned juggler, and competing with the magicians of Egypt in feats of prestidigitation. Thus far, he has gained no advantage over his rivals, except in the single feat of making his serpent swallow theirs. This swallowing feat, however, being a natural act on the part of a serpent, cannot be regarded at all as a miracle. The serpents of the magicians could doubtless have done the same thing to serpents smaller than themselves.

These three feats undoubtedly rank among the most notable miracles ever claimed to have been performed. They far surpass any said to have been performed by Jesus. If, then, on account of the comparatively trivial miracles said to have been performed by him, you claim that Jesus was certainly a divine personage of a very high order, are you not compelled to admit that the far greater miracles performed by them prove that the magicians of Egypt were divine personages of a much higher order? The first miracle said to have been performed by Jesus was that of changing a few casks of water into wine. This transformation he performed upon water to which he had direct access. He performed it, too, in the presence of none but a crowd of drunken revelers who were totally unfitted to determine the means by which the transformation was made. Indeed, the performing of this feat, by jugglers and by chemists, is so common at the present time that it no longer excites wonder in those who witness it. The party who would now claim this feat to be a miracle, performed by the power of God, would be regarded as a blasphemer, and would be hissed out of countenance by every intelligent audience. Not so, however, of the stupendous feat of instantly changing the great Nile, and all the other waters of Egypt, into blood. This prodigious

transformation was performed upon immense bodies of water to which the operators had no access, the waters, in some instances, being a hundred miles distant. It was performed, too, in the presence of sober, intelligent, and highly educated persons who could not have been imposed upon. Indeed, the Bible and all its champions admit that the feat in question was a genuine miracle. If, then, because he performed the quite common feat of changing a small quantity of water into wine, you are justifiable in regarding Jesus as a God, am I not justifiable in regarding as gods the magicians who performed the incomparably greater miracle of changing all the waters of Egypt into blood?

The most notable miracle ever claimed to have been performed by Jesus was the raising of the dead. Admitting, however, that he actually did perform this feat, what does his performance amount to when compared with that of the magicians in question who, on a moment's notice, without any materials except a few dry wooden rods, instantly made and gave life to genuine serpents; and who, while sitting in the king's palace, without any materials at all, instantly made and gave life to countless millions of frogs all over the land of Egypt? The feat of the man who merely removes from a well-made watch some *obstacle* that has caused it to stop running, and who thus simply *restarts* it to running, amounts to almost nothing at all when compared to that of the man who, from crude materials, *makes* a watch and gives it *original motion*. So the feat of Jesus, who merely *removed* some *obstacle* that had caused the machinery of life in the body of his subject to temporarily stop running, and who thus simply *restarted* that machinery to running, amounted to almost nothing when compared to the astounding feats of those magicians who, as I have already shown, instantly manufactured *living serpents* from *wooden rods*, and who, all out of nothing, and at great distances from where themselves were, instantly *created* millions upon millions of *living frogs*. By means

of their own enchantments, those magicians instantly caused dry and hard wooden rods to dissolve, and the elements of which they were composed to transform themselves into other entirely different elements, and to then arrange themselves into the various tissues of living serpents; into flesh, blood, bones, tendons, and skin; into lungs, with their millions of minute air cells; into hearts, with their wonderful muscular power and their exquisitely delicate valves; into veins and arteries, with their untold millions of capillaries too minute to be traced out even with the aid of the most powerful microscopes; into nerves of motion and nerves of sensation, with their equally minute and multitudinous ramifications; into ears, with their indescribably beautiful machinery; into eyes, with their almost infinitely perfect arrangement of coats, humors, retinas, ciliary processes, optic nerves, etc.; into brains and sexual organs, with all their mysterious machinery of thought and of procreation; in short, into all the organs of life, of sensation, of thought, of motion, of appetite, and of passion. And all this and more may, with equal truthfulness, be said of the multiplied millions of frogs created by those magicians at great distances from where themselves were. How did the magicians manage to do this? How did they, especially when far away, manage to seize hold of every atom of matter, and convey it to its proper place in the wonderfully delicate tissues of those living creatures? Did they do it at all? If they did, were they not gods? If they did not, is not the Bible a monstrous imposition?

Since the laws of nature never change, men undeniably still retain all the powers they ever possessed. If, then, they ever possessed the power to make living frogs, serpents, etc., *ad libitum*, they must, of necessity, still retain that same power. Why, then, may we not have frog factories established sufficient to supply all the frog-eaters of the world? And since frogs are just as hard to make as are men and other animals, why may we not have horse

factories, cow factories, man factories, etc.? Would not such factories be a vast improvement upon the slow old method by which we have hitherto been wont to increase our own numbers and those of our domestic animals? What could be more convenient or more beautiful than to have merely to grind out a noble man, or a lovely woman, whenever we might chance to desire one?

In connection with these last three pretended miracles, were those of changing all the dust of Egypt into lice, and of filling the whole land of Egypt with fearful swarms of flies. These truly wonderful feats are said to have been successfully performed by God, through his agents Moses and Aaron. Their rival jugglers, however, the magicians of Egypt, could not perform this feat. Indeed from this time onward, God proved so much superior to them, in feats of jugglery, that they soon gave up the useless contest. If actually performed, these two feats, as well as the feat of filling the whole land of Egypt with locusts a few days later, were certainly notable miracles, and yet because they are so similar to the miracles of the frogs and the serpents, I will pass them without further notice. I will next notice the pretended miracle, said to have been performed by Moses and Aaron, of killing all the cattle in Egypt with a deadly murrain. All Bible critics agree that, as used in this connection, the term cattle includes all those domestic animals that were used as beasts of burden, or whose flesh was used for food. Indeed, all these animals are mentioned by name: "Behold the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep; there shall be a very grievous murrain. . . . And the Lord did that thing on the morrow, and *all* the cattle of Egypt died" (Ex. ix, 3, 6). From this, we learn that, in the entire land of Egypt, there was not left alive a single horse, ass, ox, camel, or sheep, except those belonging to the Hebrews. Of itself, this was a very wonderful, as well as a very cruel, trick. What is

still more wonderful, however, is the fact that, on the very next morning, God plagued, with deadly boils, both man and *beast*, throughout all the land of Egypt. Did God thus plague the *dead* beasts? If not, what *beasts* did he plague? Our wonder still increases, however, when we read that, on the very next morning after the poor dead cattle had been thus plagued with boils, God warned Pharaoh to send and collect *all* the cattle from the fields, and place them under shelter, because there was going to be a terrible storm of hail which would kill all the cattle that were left in the fields. Being thus duly warned a day in advance, Pharaoh, by sending out a few thousands of messengers at the rate of only one hundred miles an hour, could have warned all his people to collect their cattle into places of safety. This, however, he neglected to do; probably because he thought that hail could not *kill* cattle that had already been two days *dead*. The result of this very natural neglect was that God again *killed* all these poor *dead* cattle, except a very few which those of Pharaoh's servants who feared the Lord, and who heard in time of the impending hail storm, had made to "flee into the houses." How did God manage to thus *kill dead* cattle, and how did the God-fearing Egyptians in question manage to make dead cattle "*flee unto the houses?*"

In Ex. xi, 5, and xii, 29, we learn that all the first-borns of all the beasts, and especially of all the cattle, of Egypt, were miraculously destroyed. This wholesale destruction of the first-borns of their cattle is represented as having been a terrible misfortune to the whole Egyptian nation, and as extending throughout the entire land of Egypt. Had the victims of this cruel and unnecessary trick been only the first-borns of the few cattle that had survived the hail, their destruction could not have been regarded as a very great or very general misfortune. From the magnitude of the misfortune, therefore, and from the fact that it affected equally all parts of Egypt, we learn that it extended to the first-borns of "*all the cattle of Egypt.*" But, as we

have already seen, "*all the cattle of Egypt*," had already been killed, only a few days before, of murrain, and nearly all of them a second time by hail. The most fortunate of these first-borns, therefore, now died for the *second time*; the less fortunate of them for at least the *third time*. In addition to these three deaths, many of them, no doubt, had died once also from *boils*. But they were still not done dying. Three days after this last killing, Pharaoh, with *all his horses alive and well*, was in hot pursuit of the Hebrews, who, by God's orders, had borrowed, from their too confiding Egyptian neighbors, vast amounts of valuables, and were now, also by God's orders, running away with this ill-gotten plunder. When all these horses and other cattle perished, as we are informed that they soon afterwards did, by drowning in the Red Sea, the most of them must have died for the *third time*, and many of them for the *fourth*, or even the *fifth time*. How many lives did they have? A cat is said to have only nine. And by what *modus operandi* were all these wonderful, and yet exceedingly cruel, killing-tricks performed?

I will next notice the pretended miracle, said to have been performed by Moses, of producing, throughout the entire land of Egypt, three days of *darkness* so dense that it could be *felt*. Now we know that darkness is simply the absence of light, and not a material substance capable of being felt. Hence we know that the Bible states a falsehood when it declares that the darkness in question was felt. Besides this, we are informed that, during the whole three days of that fearful darkness, not one of the Egyptians rose from his place. We are also informed that, during this entire period, the Hebrews all had light in their houses. Can all this be true? Even when claimed to be the history of a miracle, does the story come within the bounds of reasonable credibility? The Egyptians numbered several millions, and they were scattered over an extensive country. How, then, did the author ascertain that "they saw not one another, neither rose any from his

place for three days?" Did he inquire of each one of them? And is it not utterly incredible—nay, is it not utterly impossible, that several millions of men, women, and children should have lain still, for three whole days and nights, and not one of them be called by hunger, thirst, or any other necessity, to rise from his place?

Besides all this, we are informed that, during this very period, Pharaoh sent for Moses. But, without rising from his place, how did the messenger manage to go for Moses? And since this messenger and Moses managed to travel about from place to place, why could not the rest of the people have managed to do so too? Would not a common terror have seized upon them all, and would they not, especially in the great cities, have made use of artificial lights, and assembled in immense crowds? Should three days of total darkness come over Europe or America, at the present time, would not a single individual, think you, during all that time, arise from his place? Would not intense excitement, and uncontrollable fear, make all the people arise from their places? And why did not the Egyptians, who were a people noted for their learning, ever make a record of any of these wonderful things?

Besides all this, how did the Hebrews, during the three days in question, manage to have light in their houses? What kind of light was it? If it was artificial light, could not the far more wealthy Egyptians have had the same kind of light in their houses? If it was sunlight, how did it reach the interior of the Hebrew houses without dissipating the dense darkness outside? As I stated in a former lecture, the ancients generally, if not universally, believed that light was a kind of white gaseous cloud entirely independent of the sun, or of any other luminous body. On this idea, the author of Genesis finds no difficulty in having several perfect days before there was any sun. In order to produce day, he simply has to have this white cloud moved across the face of the earth. So, in the case before us, the author of Exodus, who is doubtless the

same person, acting upon this same erroneous idea, has portions of this same white cloud sliced off, and put into the Hebrew houses. Science, however, having now utterly overthrown this idea of light, has proved the whole story to be an absurd fabrication totally unworthy of belief.

Another important miracle, said to have been performed by Moses, was the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea in such a way that the Hebrews passed through it on dry land. The power by which Moses is said to have performed this miracle, and all his other miracles, was bottled up in a wooden rod or wand which, after the manner of magicians, he used to wave over the object upon which he was operating. In the present instance, so the Bible informs us, the result of the waving of this rod over the Red Sea was to cause a strong east wind to blow, during one whole night, in such a way as to drive the waters back, and render the bed of the sea dry land. Without calling attention to the monstrous absurdity of having power enough to control the winds bottled up in a small wooden rod, and made to go forth at the command of the party who held the rod, I will call your attention to other matters, which clearly show that the whole story is a pure fiction, and a very clumsy one at that. By observing the trend of the northern part of the Red Sea, you will at once perceive that, so far from driving the waters back from that part of the sea, an *east* wind would inevitably have had the very opposite effect of driving them in from the great body of the sea, and thus rendering them deeper in the very part which the Hebrews are said to have crossed. A *northwest* wind might have done some good, but an *east* wind was about the worst that could have blown. Indeed, this part of the story seems to be directly contradicted by another part which declares that, so far from being thus driven back out of the armlet in question, the waters were still present, standing up like walls on the right hand and on the left of the Hebrews as they were passing through?

Another noted miracle, said to have been performed by Moses, was the bringing of a large stream of water from a dry rock by simply striking the rock with the same wooden rod in which so much power was bottled up. The stream of water that gushed forth from this rock was amply sufficient to supply the wants of three millions of people and several times that number of cattle. In so hot and dry a climate, this would have required a small river. The rock from which this immense supply of water is said to have been thus obtained is still lying in its old place at the foot of Mount Sinai, and, by travelers who have seen it, is described as a block of red granite about eighteen feet in length and twelve feet in height. It is a loose and isolated rock, and seems at some very remote period to have fallen from the rocky side of the mountain, at the base of which it now lies. In the side of this rock there is said to be seen, at the present day, a cylindrical cavity about four inches in diameter and eighteen inches in depth. From this small cavity the river in question is said to have gushed forth. In this cavity, therefore, which evidently has not always existed in the rock, the true believer plainly sees the traces of *God's* power, which was once bottled up in a wooden rod. These traces he sees by means of his *faith*. In this same cavity, however, the unbeliever just as plainly sees the traces of a *stone-cutter's* power, which was more recently bottled up in a *chisel*. These traces he sees with his own natural *eyes*, and we are at liberty to agree with whichever party gives what seems to us to be the more reasonable explanation of the origin of that cavity. Since there never could have been any considerable quantity of water stored away in this rock, or in any other rock in that vicinity, the water in question must, of necessity, have been created all out of nothing as it flowed. But do you really believe that any such special creation ever occurred?

In Num. xi, 31-33, we read: "And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and

let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high on the face of the earth. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails; he that gathered least gathered ten homers; and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague." This is gravely given as real history, but is it not utterly incredible? Where was the Lord, and how far was he from the camp, when the wind in question went forth from him? At which end of him did it go forth? Could the wind have thus gone forth *from* him, without going where *he* was *not*? Could he, then, have been *omnipresent*? If not, can he be so now? Besides this, what were these quails doing in the *sea*? Did they live there, or did the Lord, by a special creation, produce them there, and then send them forth directly from himself, just as he did the wind that carried them to the camp of the Hebrews? Certain champions of the Bible would fain have us believe that those quails came from the other side of the sea? The Bible, however, says that they were brought from the sea, not from beyond it. Besides this, what could so many quails have been doing on the other side of the sea, and how could the wind that went forth from the Lord have gathered up so many quails and nothing else? Extending as they did about a day's journey on every side of the camp, those quails must have covered an area of about three thousand six hundred square miles, and being three and two-thirds feet deep, there must have been about twelve billion cubic yards of them, or at least thirty trillions of birds. Why did the Lord waste so many quails upon a single feast?

Besides all this, "he that gathered least gathered ten homers." This would be over one hundred and eleven

bushels of our measure. This being the least catch of all, the average catch to each man must have been several hundred bushels. Putting it at only two hundred bushels, however, and supposing that only one-third of the people engaged in catching quails, we have two hundred million bushels of meat, or enough to load over six hundred thousand freight cars. But how could each man, in so short a time, have caught, dressed, and dried so many quails? With three and two-thirds feet in depth of putrefying flesh all over the ground for a day's journey on each side of the camp, where could the people have found room on which to spread abroad their six hundred thousand car loads or more of quails? And, with such surroundings, how could the people have lived? We all know that, placed thus in the center of a mass of carrion sixty miles in diameter, and three and two-thirds feet deep, not a single Hebrew could have survived to tell the story. Besides all these things, we are assured that, "while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague." This is spoken of all the people, and is either true or false. If true, then, at precisely the same moment, three millions of people must have opened their mouths and taken flesh between their teeth; and then, before any one of them had begun to chew, "the wrath of the Lord was kindled," etc. If this be a true story, may not the story of Jack the Giant-killer be also true? Indeed, it would be just as easy for me to believe all that is related of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp, as it would be for me to believe all that is related of Moses and his wonderful wooden rod.

I will next notice that unparalleled miracle, said to have been performed by Joshua, of causing the sun and the moon to stand still in midheaven for about one whole day. The account of this wonderful event is found in the tenth chapter of Joshua. From this account we learn that Joshua, having overthrown his enemies in battle,

wished, according to his invariable custom on such occasions, to follow up his victory by butchering all the helpless and inoffensive women and children; and that, perceiving that he was not likely to have time enough to do this before night-fall, he said: "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." We further learn that, in obedience to this command, "the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day." This made the day in question about twice as long as other days.

This story professes to be ordinary history, and, of necessity, it must be either true or false. If true, what does its truth involve? What kind of a being does it make of God? Were not the victims of this horrible butchery just as much his children, just as much entitled to his love and his protection, as were the butchers themselves? Why, then, did he exhibit so execrable a partiality toward the butchers? Why did he exhibit so incontinent a haste to have the poor victims in question butchered? Did not he himself create the laws of nature? Were not those laws perfect and right? If so, could they have ever needed any change or any suspension? Could such laws have been either changed or suspended without involving wrong and imperfection? Could not God have afforded to let his own perfect and unchangeable laws have their course? Could he not have afforded to wait till the next day to have his own poor children butchered? Could he not have afforded to allow them one sad night in which to mourn their loved ones already slain, and to prepare for the awful fate to which themselves were doomed? Do you really believe that he ever had so insatiate a thirst for the blood of his own children, of little smiling infants, and poor, helpless, heart-broken women, that he actually did thus suspend the laws of the universe simply that he might, a few hours sooner, glut his sight with the horrible spectacle of their wholesale butchery? Does not this story make him a thousand times worse

than his instrument, the devil? And has this monstrous God ever, since then, changed for the better? If not, how can you have the effrontery to ask intelligent men to serve him?

In order to believe this monstrous butcher story, we must, of necessity, first believe that the earth is flat and stationary, as the church, until quite recently, invariably taught that it was, and that the sun, the moon, and the stars all revolve daily around the earth as the great central body of the universe. Had not the sun been in motion, it would have been absurd in the extreme to command him, as Joshua did, to cease moving. It would also have been an absurd falsehood to declare, as the Bible does, that, in obedience to Joshua's absurd command, the sun did cease moving, for about one whole day, and that he then resumed his former motion and went down. From the language in question, it is evident that Joshua understood the sun, and not the earth, to be the moving body. And the result of his command, if any such result ever followed, proved that his views were correct. This is the sense in which the Jews always understood this scripture. So of the Christian Church. This was one of the passages of scripture by which she often proved the immobility of the earth, the daily revolution of the sun, the moon, and the stars around the earth, and the consequently damnable heresy of those who had the intelligence and the temerity to teach what we now know to be the true system of astronomy. With this old and utterly exploded geocentric system of astronomy, and with this alone, can the scripture in question be made to harmonize. This pretended miracle, then, is as thoroughly exploded as is the system of astronomy upon which it was based. If, then, you retain this absurd story of Joshua and the sun, you are bound to retain also the absurd system of astronomy upon which alone that story can rest. Indeed, since darkness and ignorance can never be made to harmonize with light and knowledge, the religion of an age of darkness and

ignorance can never be made to harmonize with the science of an age of light and knowledge.

Many of the champions of the Bible, knowing how utterly in vain it would be to longer contend against the demonstrated truths of science, have been compelled to admit that the story of Joshua and the sun cannot be literally true. With the unfairness characteristic of this class, however, these men attempt to sustain this monstrous story by resorting, as is their wont in all such cases, to the most unwarrantable assumptions. Some of them admit that Joshua was ignorant of the true system of astronomy, and that, in his ignorance, he did an absurd thing when he commanded the sun to stand still. They assume, however, that God, knowing what Joshua wanted, kindly stopped for him the revolution of the earth on her own axis, and thus gave this ignorant and inhuman butcher a double day in which to accomplish his worse than hellish purposes. Others assume that Joshua himself probably understood the true system of astronomy, but was obliged to adapt his language, on the occasion in question, to the understanding of the ignorant masses by whom he was surrounded. Both of these assumptions contradict the plain language of the Bible, which declares that the sun, and not the earth, did cease moving for the space of about one day, and that he then resumed his motion. If the story be not true as the Bible tells it, these assumptionists can never make it true by any changes they may make in it in their attempts to make it harmonize with the truths of science. No one who was sufficiently intelligent to understand the true system of astronomy, would ever have thought of such a thing as commanding the earth, the sun, or any other of the great bodies of the universe, to stand still in space while he should butcher a lot of women and children. And no one of so much intelligence would have thought of such a thing as asserting that such a command had been given, and had been obeyed. Such stories could originate only in the grossest ignorance, and

those who believe them can have no just claim to intelligence. Indeed, you might as well attempt to make darkness harmonize with light, disease with health, vice with virtue, and deformity with perfection, as to attempt to make your Bible stories—your relics of the dark and bloody past—harmonize with the knowledge of the bright present, or with the hopes of the brighter future.

Admitting, however, that, on the occasion in question, the earth did cease her diurnal revolution, would not the waters, and all other loose bodies on her surface, have kept right on at the rate of about one thousand miles an hour? Would not the oceans have swept over the continents with a force that would have torn every mountain from its base? Could the butcher, Joshua, have kept his hold on the earth long enough to cut the throat of even one woman? You may claim, however, that, on this occasion, the law of inertia was also suspended. This claim, however, is a totally unwarrantable assumption. And, if it were true, how much would it help your cause? In any view of the case, must there not have been, of necessity, over one entire half of the earth's surface, a day of double the usual length, and over the entire surface of the other half a night of correspondingly increased length? Would not these extremely wonderful—these unutterably fearful—phenomena have created, among all the nations of the world, the most intense excitement, the most uncontrollable alarm? And would not every nation have had some record, or, at least, some tradition, of these wonderful phenomena? How does it happen, then, that no people but the Jews have any such record, or any such tradition? And how does it happen that, even of the Jews, very few do now or ever did believe this monstrous story?

In 1 Chron. xxij, 14, we read: "Now behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in

abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto." This language is said to have been spoken by David to his son Solomon, to whom, on account of his own great age and many infirmities, he was about to resign his kingdom. In his wonderful work of preparing materials for the house of the Lord, David does not claim to have received any miraculous aid. His declaration, therefore, as above given, is more properly an extravagance in language than the statement of a miraculous event. On account of its incredible nature, however, I have determined to include David's wonderful work in question among the pretended miracles of the Bible. Without noticing any of his other materials, let us examine his pile of gold. Of this, he declares that he has prepared a "hundred thousand talents." A Hebrew talent being equal to ninety-three and three-fourths pounds, this would give us four thousand six hundred and eighty-seven and one-half tons of gold. This would load at least four hundred and sixty-eight freight cars, and in round numbers would be worth about \$3,000,000,000. And all this gold was prepared by David, for one single purpose, in time of his trouble. If he had not been in trouble, how many hundred car-loads of gold do you suppose that he could have prepared? Where did he get so many thousand tons of gold, and what finally became of it? Can any intelligent person believe that, in a time of trouble, the king of a small nation of pastoral people, ever thus, for a single purpose, prepared some one thousand five hundred tons more gold than is now in the possession of the entire population of the world?

In Jud. iii, 31, we learn that, with no weapon but an ox-goad, an enterprising young man by the name of Shamgar, at one time, slew six hundred well-armed men. In Jud. xv, 15, we also learn that another still more enterprising young man by the name of Samson, with no weapon but the jaw-bone of an ass, at one time, slew one thousand well-armed men; and that, when he had finished this little

job, he turned up the jaw bone and took a drink of water from a cavity inside of it. This same young man is said, on a future occasion, with his naked hands, to have overturned a large stone building upon which were three thousand people, all of whom were slain by the fall of the building. And now, can any two of you look each other in the face, and, without laughing, say that you really believe these monstrous stories?

The Bible declares that, on a certain occasion, three men were thrown into a furnace which was heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated, and that, nevertheless, they very coolly walked about in there, and finally came forth, without so much as having their hair singed, or their clothes scorched. Science, on the other hand, declares that no such events ever occurred; that so intense a heat could neither have been produced nor measured, and that, if it could have been produced, it would have instantly converted those three men, hair, clothes, and all, into incandescent vapor. And which seems the more credible, the declaration of the Bible, or that of science?

The Bible declares that, for three days, the Rev. Jonah occupied lodgings inside of the maw of a fish; and that he finally came forth alive and well, but a sadder and a better man. Science, on the other hand, declares that no such events ever occurred; that, if taken alive into the stomach of a fish, a man would be suffocated in a few moments, and would then be digested and converted into nutriment for the fish. Which is the more reasonable declaration? The Bible declares that, on a certain occasion, a certain ass opened its mouth and exhorted like a Methodist preacher at a camp-meeting. Science, on the other hand, declares that no ass of that species ever exhorted in any such manner. Which declaration is most worthy of belief? The Bible teaches that Elijah, body, soul, and all, went up to heaven in a chariot of fire drawn by horses of fire. Science, on the other hand, declares that no man ever went

to any such place, in any such manner. Which declaration is most in accordance with reason and common sense?

There are hundreds more pretended miracles mentioned in the Bible, but, for want of time, I must leave them unnoticed. Like those which I have noticed, they would all crumble, as it were, to dust, at the touch of reason, science, and common sense. And now, in conclusion, let me ask, if any miracles were ever really performed, why are not similar miracles performed in our own time? Is not God as able to perform them, or to have them performed, as he ever was? And do not men need them now as much as they ever did? Are not just as many men going to hell now from unbelief as at any former period? Why, then, does not God give us miracles, and thus enable us to believe? Are not we as much his children, and as much dependent upon him, as were the Jews? Are not our claims upon him as just as were theirs? Is he not horribly cruel and unjust to damn us for not having the faith which he alone could give us, but which he purposely withholds from us? Would it not be just as easy for him to give us faith, and save us, as it is for him to leave us in unbelief, and damn us? Does he take more pleasure in damning us than he does in saving us? If God fails to give us faith, and then damns us for not having it, is he not a horrible monster, worthy only of execrations? Finally, you may be damned if you do not believe all the absurd stories which I have noticed, but I will be damned if I do believe them.

LECTURE TWELFTH.

ERRORS OF THE BIBLE.

FROM its very foundation, the Christian Church has always taught that, in its entirety, the Bible is the “Inspired Word of God,” and that all its teachings are true, reasonable, and proper. So generally has this teaching been accepted that, throughout all Christendom, to even doubt the truth, the reasonableness, or the propriety of any portion of the Accepted Version of the Bible has always been held to constitute an unpardonable form of Infidelity, and to inevitably doom the persistent doubter to the unutterable torments of an endless hell.

We would naturally expect, therefore, to find this book, like its reputed author, absolutely perfect in all its departments. We would certainly expect to find it entirely free from all those grosser faults and imperfections that destroy all claim to merit or credibility even in a professedly human production. At any rate, we would certainly not expect to find it filled with positive self-contradictions, utterly irreconcilable discrepancies, glaring inconsistencies, palpable absurdities, shocking indecencies, and monstrous immoralities. To suppose that it contained any of these extremely gross faults and imperfections would be simply to suppose that it proceeded from an extremely gross, faulty, and imperfect source.

The Bible is simply an effect of which its author or producer is the cause, and no effect can possibly contain any element not found in its cause. When, therefore, I

shall have proved that the Bible is crowded with all of the gross faults and imperfections which I have named, I will have proved that it is derived from a gross, faulty, and imperfect source. If, then, that source be divine, as claimed by the champions of the Bible, I will have proved God to be a gross, faulty, and imperfect being. If that source be human, I will have proved all that I claim. I will have proved that the Bible is a grossly faulty and imperfect human production, totally unworthy of our belief or our respect. In either case, I will have proved the champions of the Bible to be base impostors and the Christian religion to be a monstrous priestly imposition.

Although it has been admitted, by high Church authority, that, as we now have it, the Bible contains at least twenty-four thousand errors, I shall not be able, in the two lectures which I shall devote to them, to notice more than one in every five hundred of this prodigious number. One five-hundredth part, however, of the errors of the Bible would effectually condemn any other book.

In Ex. xx, 11, we read: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is." In former lectures I fully proved that this language is erroneous, utterly false, and that no such creation as it describes ever occurred at all. I need not, therefore, add anything to those proofs now. If this creation ever occurred at all, it evidently included everything that ever was created. We have no account, no tradition even, of any earlier or of any later creation. Of this universal creation we read: "And God saw everything that he had made: and behold, it was very good" (Gen. i, 31). Of necessity, this latter declaration is either true or false. Which is it? The serpent was included in that creation, but was he "very good?" Has not his whole subsequent career gone to prove that he was not "very good?" Man was included in that creation, but was he "very good?" Would God have been grieved at his heart, as he afterwards was, that he made man, if man had really been "very good?" The

devil was included in that creation, but has not his whole subsequent career gone to prove that he was not "very good?" Evil was included in that creation (Is. xlv, 7), but are we to understand that evil was "very good?"

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest of it thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii, 17). If this language means anything at all, it is bound to mean exactly what it expresses. It was addressed to Adam immediately after the creation. Notwithstanding this totally uncalled-for and ferocious threat, however, Adam proceeded, without any unnecessary delay, to partake of that forbidden fruit. And did he die, as God had said that he should, on the very day on which he partook of that fruit? He certainly did not. So far from dying on that very day, he lived right on for nine hundred and thirty years, and then died, not from the effects of eating fruit, but from extreme old age. The Bible, therefore, represents God as speaking a falsehood when he declared that Adam should die on the very day on which he should eat of the fruit in question. If, then, the Bible account of this affair be correct, God stands before us convicted of having, at the very beginning of his intercourse with man, very unnecessarily resorted to the detestable and grossly immoral practice of lying. Was God thus early a shameless liar? If not, if he did not thus lie on the occasion in question, then the Bible certainly does lie when it represents him as having done so. And does not the Bible err when it thus slanders God, when it thus makes a liar of the infinitely great and glorious power that sustains the universe?

In Ex. xxiv, 9-11, we read: "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they *saw* the *God* of *Israel*: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they *saw God* and did eat and drink." In Is.

vi, 1-5, we also read : "In the year that King Uzziah died I *saw* also the *Lord*, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." Many other Bible characters also claim to have *seen God*; to have seen his *face*, his *hands*, his *feet*, his *head*, his *back parts*, etc.; in short, they claim to have seen his entire person, his position of sitting or of standing, etc. But did any of them thus see him? John i, 18, answers this question as follows : "No man hath seen *God* at any time." Many other Bible characters also unite with John in contradicting the testimony of those persons who claim to have seen God. Of necessity, the testimony of one set or the other of these witnesses is bound to be false.

"And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I *heard* thy *voice* in the garden : and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself" (Gen. iii, 9-10). Moses, also, and many other Bible characters claim to have *heard God's voice*. To those who set up this claim, however, John (v, 37) says : "Ye have neither *heard* his *voice* at any time nor *seen* his *shape*." Here, again, one set or the other of the witnesses undeniably give false testimony.

"And it came to pass after these things that God did *tempt* Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham : and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went into the place of which God had told him" (Gen. xxii, 1-3).

From this, we learn that God certainly did *tempt* Abraham, and successfully too, to commit one of the most atrocious crimes of which the human mind can conceive: the crime of butchering, in cold blood, and roasting, if not

eating, his own son. The fact that Abraham was not permitted to consummate this monstrous crime has nothing to do in the case. The *temptation* was just as real, and its effect upon Abraham's moral nature just as pernicious, as they would have been had the crime been actually committed. It is a man's *willingness* to commit *crime* that renders him a *criminal*. This fact is so evident that I suppose no one will attempt to dispute it. It is also equally evident that a man who, like Abraham, deliberately undertakes to commit a horrible crime, and is prevented from committing it only by the unexpected interference of other parties, is at heart just as much a *criminal* as he would have been had those other parties not prevented the commission of the crime.

From all this, it is evident that Abraham, being perfectly willing to commit the horrible crime of butchering and roasting his own son, and having deliberately undertaken to accomplish this crime, was, in principle, just as much a criminal as he would have been had there been no unexpected interference on the part of other persons. That interference did not make the slightest change in his moral nature, or render him a particle better than he would have been had it not occurred. In his moral nature, he was just as much a bloody murderer as he would have been had he not been prevented from accomplishing the premeditated murder which he was in the act of committing when he was interrupted. He was just as much a bloody murderer as any man would now be who should deliberately butcher, dress, and roast, as he would a pig, his own innocent child.

And, according to the teachings of the Bible, Abraham was made thus, at heart, an atrocious murderer by the direct temptation of God. We are further taught by the Bible that this atrocious criminality—this wish, this deliberate attempt to butcher, to roast, and to serve up to God, as an article of food—which God did not need—his own innocent son, was imputed, by God himself, to Abra-

ham for *righteousness*. Had Abraham been unwilling to commit the horrible crime in question—had he refused to commit it, he certainly would not have been righteous in God's sight. Since, then, God never changes, it is evident that, according to these teachings, he can not now look upon any man as *righteous* who would not be perfectly *willing*, if called upon so to do, to butcher, as he would a pig, to dress, to roast, and to serve up his own child upon God's table. How very righteous, how very fit for heaven, must he regard Freeman and others who, making Abraham, as the Bible makes him, their model, have, by butchering their own children, faithfully carried out, in our own time, both the letter and the spirit of the Bible's teachings in regard to this matter. But how shockingly blasphemous it is to attribute to God teachings so fearfully ruinous to the moral natures of all who thus accept them as of divine authority! Is it not a great error in the Bible to teach, as coming from God, doctrines so damnable in their inevitable tendencies? We are bound either to condemn these teachings, or to approve the acts of Freeman, Guiteau, and the others who, in obedience to these teachings, have sacrificed their own children or others to this same roast-meat-loving God. Which of these things will my opponents do?

“And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them” (Ex. xiv, 4). Elsewhere we learn that, on many other occasions, God successfully tempted Pharaoh to do things which, without such temptation, he would not have done. God is represented as doing this, too, simply that he might have a pretext for destroying Pharaoh, and many of the people, and all of the cattle of Egypt. But why did he wish to destroy this king, these people, and these cattle? He is made to answer this question himself by saying: “I will [by means of these wholesale slaughters] be *honored* upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that *I* am the *Lord*” (Ex. xiv, 4).

Pharaoh, it seems, did nothing but what God wished him to do, and compelled him to do. And yet, according to the teachings of the Bible, because of this enforced obedience on Pharaoh's part, God cruelly destroyed not only this poor, helpless king himself, but, also, many hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of innocent men, women, children, and cattle that had nothing at all to do with the king's acts. This blasphemous story represents God as the most atrocious of all bloody monsters. And yet the champions of the Bible have the effrontery to hold up this monster, in all his hideousness, as the perfection—the very fountain itself—of all goodness, and to require us, on pain of eternal damnation—whatever that may be—to love him, to worship him, and to become as nearly like him as possible.

So long as the people, from their very infancy, are stuffed with such teachings, so long as their lives are fashioned after this monstrous model, just so long will all Christendom continue to be, of necessity, as it always has been, dark with blood, and fearfully foul with every form of immorality and crime. In teaching these pernicious doctrines, in holding up this monstrous model for the imitation of the world, the Bible is undeniably guilty of a very grave error; and the champions of the Bible are guilty of an equally grave error, when they place this book, so destructive to true morality and virtue, in the hands of children, of heathens, and of other ignorant persons, who, above all others, are most liable to be ruined in their moral natures, by such teachings.

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God proveth you to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your

soul" (Deut. xiii, 1-3). In these passages, God is represented as sending true prophets, and as having true wonders or miracles performed, for the express purpose of tempting or misleading the people into the practice of idolatry. He is represented as doing this, too, simply to ascertain whether they do or do not love him. This represents him as a pitifully ignorant, a despicably jealous, and a shockingly deceitful being. In order to prove to him that they love him, the people must reject the true prophecies and the genuine wonders or miracles which he himself gives them.

In other places, God is represented as threatening to make the people feel the dire effects of his wrath if they do not obey the teachings of those prophets who prove that their mission is of God by thus performing genuine miracles or correctly predicting future events. Here, however, he forbids the people to obey the teachings of such prophets. Through one prophet he commands the people to do certain things; through another equally true prophet, he forbids them to do these things. We can never know, therefore, whether it is safer to obey or to disobey his commands. Even Jesus, knowing the extremely doubtful character of this God, his own putative father, earnestly begs him to "Lead us not into temptation." If God was never wont to lead men into temptation, would Jesus have ever thought of giving us such a form of prayer? What, then, are we to think of James, who flatly contradicts all these teachings, by saying: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither *tempteth he any man*: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (Jas. i, 13, 14). And now are we to be damned if we believe that God *does*, or that he does *not*, tempt men? Among these witnesses, there is certainly a lie out. Who tells it?

As you are doubtless all well aware, a great portion of what is called the Pentateuch is filled with what pro-

fess to be commandments of God to the Hebrews concerning the offering of sacrifices, the observance of the Sabbath, the celebration of feasts, etc. Through Jeremiah, however, God is made to emphatically deny that he ever gave any such commandments. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spake *not* unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning *burnt offerings* or *sacrifices*" (Jer. vii, 21, 22). Through Isaiah, also, God is made to indignantly deny that he was ever so foolish as to command the people to offer sacrifices to himself, to observe the Sabbaths, the new moons, etc. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new-moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new-moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary with them" (Is. i, 11-14). If Jeremiah and Isaiah speak the truth, then it is an undeniable fact that the Pentateuch is, to a great extent, filled with falsehoods. In any view of the case, Jeremiah and Isaiah, rejecting, as they certainly did, nearly all there was of the Bible in their day, were certainly a couple of incorrigible Infidels. Were they eternally damned for being such?

"And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and *he* [God himself] moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah" (2 Sam. xxiv, 1). Here God himself is represented as the instigator of that affair of numbering the people. This passage, however, is positively contradicted by 1 Chron. xxi, 1, which says: "And

Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." If either one of these two contradictory passages be true, which one is it? The Bible certainly errs in thus giving two utterly irreconcilable accounts of the same event.

"A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. xxxii, 4). "Good and upright is the Lord" (Ps. xxv, 8). "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments" (Ps. cxix, 137). "Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments" (Neh. ix, 13). Now compare this set of quotations, which give God a most excellent character, with the following, which give him a very bad character: "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things" (Is. xlv, 7). "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos iii, 6). "Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; and I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. xx, 25, 26). "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Ex. xx, 5). Since these two sets of passages give utterly irreconcilable descriptions of God's character, the one set or the other is bound to be false.

"The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion: slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Ps. cxlv, 8, 9). "God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv, 16). Now compare the glorious character of God, as given in these passages, with the monstrous character given of him in the following passages. When you have made this comparison, you will be

compelled to admit that the one set of these passages or the other are bound to be false. "The Lord is a man of war" (Ex. xv, 3). "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God" (Deut. iv, 24). "Then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness" (Ezek. xx, 21). "I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men; were it not that I *feared* the *wrath* of the *enemy*, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, *Our* hand is high, and the *Lord* hath not *done* all this" (Deut. xxxii, 27). What a miserable God he was to thus fear the wrath of a few small tribes of barbarians that he himself professed to have made—to thus fear that those barbarians would make fun of him, if he should perform his will upon his rebellious favorites by destroying them! A cowardly God! What an idea!

"And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his *brother*, and every man his *companion*, and every man his *neighbor*. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his *son*, and upon his *brother*; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day" (Ex. xxxii, 27-29). The Douay or Catholic Bible puts the number of men slain on this occasion at twenty-three thousand, instead of only three thousand as given here. Whatever may have been the number of the slain, however, the slaying of them thus in so cruel and treacherous a manner, by men as guilty as themselves, was certainly a most fearfully atrocious murder. Besides constituting a positive contradiction, therefore, to those passages that represent God as "gracious," "good to all," etc., this passage represents him as promising his blessing to those only who will, in cold

blood, treacherously murder their own unarmed and unsuspecting neighbors, companions, brothers, and sons.

Does not the Bible greatly err in thus representing the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe as so bloody-minded and so treacherous a monster? And do not the champions of the Bible also greatly err in urging, as they do, the young and the ignorant to make this imaginary monster, so unspeakably hideous, the model after which to fashion their lives and their characters? Can we longer wonder that the history of the believers in the Bible is more foul with blood and dark with crime than is that of any other people? Can such models and such teachings have any other tendency than to crush out all that is noble in the natures of men, and to render them cruel, treacherous, blood-thirsty, and unjust? Can we hope that the worshipers of such a God will ever become better than is the God himself?

Should this same God now, for some trivial offense of which you were yourselves equally guilty, require you thus, in cold blood, to treacherously butcher your own unsuspecting brothers, sisters, children, and other dear ones, what would you think of him, and what action would you take in regard to the fulfilling of his requirement? Would you still shout his praises, and would you promptly proceed, as did the children of Levi, to commit the foul murders required of you? If you would do these things, then, like Freeman, Guiteau, and other horrible murderers, you are true and consistent worshipers of this monstrous God. You are just such persons as the teachings of the Bible tend to produce. If, however, you would not do these things, then you are certainly hypocrites and infidels, and not true Christians—not true followers of the Lord. But why would you not do these things? Why would you refuse to murder your children and other loved ones, if God should require you to do so? Would it not be just as right and proper for him to require such murders at your hands as it was for him to require them at

the hands of the children of Israel? And would it not be just as much your duty to obey him as it was the duty of the children of Israel? Would not such murders, on your part, just as much entitle you to God's blessing, as they did the children of Israel, when committed by them? And has God ever changed? If not, is he not just as likely to require us to murder our children and other loved ones as he ever was to require any other people to murder theirs?

Be all this as it may, however, you admit that God did require his followers to commit the horrible murders in question, that he did bless the murderers for their foul act, and that he is no better now than he was then. You are compelled, therefore, either to claim that such murders are right and proper, whether committed by the children of Israel or by your own neighbors; that they entitle the murderers to God's blessing, and that, if required so to do, you are willing to commit them yourselves, or else to admit that they are, at all times, horribly wicked; that the God who ever required them to be committed is a hideous monster, that yourselves are the worshipers of just such a monster, and that, in thus worshiping him, you are either base hypocrites, not believing what you profess, or else that you are true Christians striving to render yourselves and your children as much like this monster as possible. And now which horn of this dilemma will you take? For my own part, I have no use either for this hideous monster or for the pernicious book that teaches me to be like him?

“And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses? and they slew all the males. . . . And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. And they burnt all their cities, wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire. (With what else could they have burnt these things?) And they took all the

spoil, and all the prey, both of men and of beasts. And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan, near Jericho. And Moses and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them, without the camp. And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds which came from the battle. And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? . . . Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children that have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves" (Ex. xxxi, 7-18).

Does this, the most horrible of all the butcheries recorded in the annals of history, go to prove that "God is love," that he "is good to all," that he is "full of compassion," that "his tender mercies are over all his works," etc.? And, if it ever occurred at all, this fearfully atrocious butchery was committed upon the poor unprepared and inoffensive Midianites simply because they worshiped another God, and because they had vast numbers of cattle, sheep, and women that God wanted for his own chosen band of robbers and cut-throats, the Hebrews. In a poem, entitled "The Devil's Defense," I have tried to depict this unspeakably brutal butchery:

"The Lord is a man of war," 'tis said,
A fierce, a consuming fire;
And millions of the ghastly dead,
Might speak of his terrible ire.
He doth not pity, he doth not spare,
He cruelly doth destroy;
He doth not care for the wailing prayer,
To him 'tis a source of joy.

He ordereth his band, with a bloody hand,
 To butcher both young and old ;
 To render the land, like a waste of sand,
 Where the billows once have rolled.
 They hasten to do what the Lord doth command,
 Like demons let loose, they lay waste the whole land.
 Alas, for their victims ! wherever they turn,
 Destruction awaits while their villages burn.
 Great volumes of smoke, like a vast floating pall,
 Hang dark o'er the valleys, the mountains, and all ;
 From the depths of their darkness, arise in the air,
 Such yells of defiance, such screams of despair,
 That all the foul fiends of the caverns of hell
 Could never this scene in its horrors excel.

Of brave men and mighty, but few now remain,
 Their bodies lie scattered all over the plain ;
 But these few survivors, like wild beasts at bay,
 For their homes and their loved ones, still battle away ;
 But, beaten by numbers, their eyes gleaming fire,
 They scream their defiance, they fall, they expire.

Now bursts forth anew, on the smoke-burdened air,
 Most terrible wailings of utter despair ;
 Old women, with hair like the pure driven snow,
 Are butchered, and left to be food for the crow.
 The fond mothers flee with their babes at the breast,
 Oh ! could they save these, they'd endure all the rest !
 But, alas for these mothers ! in vain do they flee,
 The light of to-morrow they never will see ;
 For God's servants meet them, around them there rains
 A shower of blood mixed with their babies' crushed brains ;
 Oh ! horrible ! horrible ! maddening sight !
 Haste thee, deep darkness, and hide it in night !
 The poor mothers cling to the bodies yet hot,
 They gaze in the eyes, but are recognized not ;
 The lips that so lately were wreathed in a smile,
 All mangled and gory still quiver awhile ;
 Death's pallor creeps over each poor little face,

The heart-beatings cease, and the eyes glaze apace.
The mothers see this, and are now glad to die,
No longer they struggle, no longer they cry;
Their throats are now cut, and their blood, like a spout,
On their babies' dead faces comes gushing right out;
Their bodies unburied encumber the sod,
And this is all done by the orthodox God.

Suppose that, in order to gratify some unaccountable whim on his own part, God should now select, for his own special favorites, some cruel, licentious, and avaricious people more powerful than ourselves; suppose that he should take up his abode in a little wooden box among this people, devote his entire time to their interests, and treat all other people as enemies; suppose, too, that, for the use of these his special favorites, he should desire to seize upon our flocks, our herds, and our women; suppose, finally, that, in order to secure all these coveted objects, he should have us all slain in battle for which we were not prepared, our mothers, our wives, our married sisters and daughters, together with our male infants, all butchered in cold blood, and our virgin sisters and daughters all divided out to be outraged at pleasure by their brutal murderers, would his atrocious conduct show that he is a God of love, that he "is good to all," that he is "full of compassion," that "his tender mercies are over all his works," etc.? And would these unutterably foul deeds be any worse, if perpetrated upon ourselves and our loved ones, than they were when perpetrated upon the Midianites and others? O Christian! Christian! how greatly do you err in trying to be like this monstrous God, and in trying to make your children and others like him! Is he any better now than he was then?

"And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword" (Josh. vi, 21). For a long list of such atrocious butcheries, committed upon

unoffending people and their cattle, see the entire book of Joshua, and especially the tenth chapter. Joshua is represented as invariably butchering, in cold blood, without any distinction of age, sex, or condition, all that fell into his power. He is represented, too, as committing all these foul butcheries by the direct command of the God that you worship. The whole bloody history closes as follows: "And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time; because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel." Was this blood-thirsty "Lord God of Israel" a fit object to be held up to the people of the present day as a model for their imitation? And do not these accounts of his horrible cruelties effectually contradict those passages which represent him as being "good to all," as being a God whose "tender mercies are over all his works," etc.? If the accounts of his horrible butcheries be true, must not the assertions that he is "good to all," etc., necessarily be false? In any view of the case, is not the Bible a book of errors?

Besides all these horrible deeds, committed by your adopted Hebrew God, he accepted Jephthah's daughter as a burnt offering, as food upon which he regaled himself, in return for a victory which he had given Jephthah over the Ammonites (See Jud. xi). In the twenty-first chapter of 2 Samuel, we learn that he also demanded and accepted as sacrifices seven innocent children in atonement for an offense committed by their grandfather many years before their birth. David, the man above all others after God's own heart, had these hideous sacrifices offered to God, although five of them were his own orphaned step-sons. The ninth verse says: "And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord." From the next verse, we learn that the friends of these poor murdered children were not permitted to take their bodies down for burial. This is clear from the fact that the mother of two of the children, to keep the birds and beasts of prey from feeding upon

their bodies, lay near them, day and night, on the cold hard rock, from the time of barley-harvest, when they were hanged, till the rains of autumn began to fall upon them. Then nothing remained of them but their bones, and these, as we learn further on, had evidently fallen apart and lay scattered upon the ground. These bones were finally gathered up and buried. "And after that God was entreated for the land." In other words, by this monstrous offering, his wrath was appeased, and he removed the famine with which for three years he had been afflicting the people, afflicting them, too, for an offense of which none of them was guilty.

The other five children, being full orphans, had no fond mother to guard their dead bodies. David, their stepfather, the man so peculiarly after God's own heart, was in his harem, reveling with his many wives and concubines, and thus doing that which "was right in the sight of the Lord," while the bodies of these poor murdered children, whose protector he should have been, were slowly dropping to pieces in the sun and the rain. Picture to yourself the unutterable agony of that loving mother as she kept her lone vigils, day and night, for long weary months, while the bodies of her poor murdered children were dropping to pieces before her face. Picture to yourself your own loved little ones thus murdered by order of your God; picture to yourself the agony of their mother watching their bodies thus drop to pieces in the sun; picture to yourself all these things, and then, if you can do so, shout this bloody God's praises, declare that he is "good to all," that "his tender mercies are over all his works," etc., and that he is a proper model after which to fashion our lives.

I have dwelt at length upon these matters, because I wish you to understand that there is an utter inconsistency between the character of God, as portrayed by the empty words of his abject flatterers, and that portrayed by his recorded acts. According to the words of his flatterers, he

appears to have been a model of perfection. Judging his character, however, from his acts, he must have been the most hideous of all monsters. Which of these two contrary characters did he really possess? Which one of them does he now possess? What really good act has he ever done?

It has always been claimed by the champions of the Bible that this book is the great fountain whence all our ideas of morality are derived. The justness of this claim I deny; and in a future lecture, I will prove that, taken as a whole, the Bible is one of the most prolific of all sources of immorality. In my present lecture, I simply wish to show that, in regard to its moral teachings, the Bible is utterly self-contradictory; that it gives us two entirely different sets of moral teachings, the one of which, though rarely if ever sustained by example, inculcates a morality of a high and noble character, while the other, sustained by vast numbers of examples, inculcates a morality, or rather an immorality, of an exactly opposite character. Let us now see whether these remarks be true in regard to the Bible's teachings concerning the sexual relations.

All the common forms of immorality, arising from an abuse of the sexual relations, may be classified under the following three heads: polygamy, fornication, and adultery. In regard to polygamy, including concubinage, the Bible is entirely self-consistent; every passage in it, bearing upon the subject at all, being unequivocally in favor of this form of immorality. Of polygamy, therefore, I need not now say anything more. In regard to fornication and adultery, we read: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. xx, 14). "Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers. . . shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. vi, 9, 10). "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman, lacketh understanding: he that doeth it, destroyeth his own soul" (Prov. vi, 32). "Flee fornication; every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own

body" (1 Cor. vi, 18). These passages certainly condemn both fornication and adultery, whatever they may be.

As to what constitutes fornication, and what adultery, there is a difference of opinion among the highest authorities. Some hold that sexual intercourse constitutes adultery, if either one of the parties engaged in the act be bound in marriage to a third party. Others hold that the sexual act constitutes adultery only when the woman is thus bound; that, if she be unmarried, the act, although committed by a married man, does not constitute a higher offense than fornication. Although this latter view is not now held by the majority of the people, the preponderance of evidence is, nevertheless, largely in its favor. Indeed, the word adultery means simply the act of adulterating or mixing; and a man can adulterate or mix his neighbor's family only by having sexual intercourse with his neighbor's wife.

At any rate, the Bible, with which alone we now have to do, clearly confines adultery to those cases of illicit sexual intercourse in which the woman is another man's wife. Indeed, both adultery and fornication were confined, by the Jews, to those cases alone, in which, by the sexual act, a man invaded his neighbor's rights of property. Among them, a man could no more commit one of these offenses upon his own woman property than he could commit larceny upon his own money. This was equally true whether the man's right to the woman was a permanent one obtained by capture, purchase, or inheritance, or only a temporary one obtained by loan or hire. If a man either hired or loaned his wife, or any of his other woman property, for sexual purposes, the hirer or borrower, in holding sexual intercourse with that property, committed no offense at all against Jewish or Bible morality. All of this, however, is foreign to our subject. Since, as we now understand the matter, every common sexual act, committed outside of the marriage relation, constituted either fornication or adultery, and since both

of these forms of immorality were equally forbidden, it makes no difference by which of these two terms the nature of an illicit sexual act may be designated. I will therefore proceed, at once, to show that the Bible effectually annuls all of its own teachings against the two offenses in question, by commanding men, or at least by aiding and encouraging them, to commit these very offenses.

“And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms. . . . So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived and bare him a son” (Hos. i, 2, 3). From the balance of the same chapter, we learn that this woman afterwards bore Hosea two other children. By this time, however, her charms seem to have become so much faded that she was no longer able to satisfy the carnal desires of her amorous paramour, the holy old Hosea, who lived with her all this time without any pretense of marriage. At any rate, he quarreled with her, called her by vile names, threatened to strip her naked in the street and to destroy all her property, and then drove her from his house. He also, in the most brutal manner, abused the children that she had borne to himself. He said to them: “Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband. And I will not have mercy on her children, for they be the children of whoredoms” (Hos. ii, 1-4).

This brutish rake, however, this old he-whore—I mean this holy man of God—having, with Gomer, tasted to the fullest extent the indescribable joys of Venus, very naturally became disconsolate when those joys were no longer within his reach. While in this unhappy condition, he seems to have cried unto the Lord for aid and comfort. At any rate, with the most refreshing simplicity, he says: “Then said the Lord unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress. . . . So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: and I said unto her,

Thou shalt abide for many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee" (Hos. iii, 1-3). When about to engage in illicit sexual intercourse, every holy man of our own time should learn, from Hosea's prudent example, to pay the whore's fees in advance, and thus secure her all to himself for "many days." Were this admirable prudence generally practiced by our holy men, far fewer of them would be detected in their libidinous enjoyments, and, consequently, there would be far fewer church scandals than there now are.

Here are two cases of the most open and shameless lewdness practiced by the express command of the God that you worship. And can these cases, by any possibility, be made to harmonize with those passages, above quoted, which prohibit both fornication and adultery? If they can be, if Hosea committed neither fornication nor adultery, then it is evident that the prohibitions against these offenses were so limited in their application as to become practically of no use at all. If, according to the Bible's code of morals, there was nothing wrong in Hosea's conduct, if, as I hold, the fact that, by hire or otherwise, he had, temporarily at least, a property right to the bodies of those two women, rendered his sexual intercourse with them perfectly right and proper, according to the code in question, then, so far from being what the champions of the Bible would have us believe that it is, the highest ever taught, that code is, undeniably, a monstrously low one, easily evaded, and totally unfit to be taught, or even read, by respectable people of the present time.

If, however, on the other hand, these cases cannot be reconciled with the prohibitions in question—if Hosea did commit the sin of either fornication or adultery, then, by commanding him to commit this sin, God virtually annulled all the commands he had ever given against it. At any rate, Hosea so understood the matter. Before him he had all the prohibitions ever recorded against the com-

mission of fornication and adultery. Notwithstanding this fact, however, when commanded to commit these acts, he proceeded at once to do so, thus showing that he regarded the command to commit them as a repeal or recalling of all the commands ever given against committing them.

Thus we see that Hosea threw the entire great weight of his example in favor of committing fornication and adultery, as we now understand them, and against observing the commands which prohibit them to be committed. And thus it is with nearly all the other noted characters of the Bible, who, by the champions of this book, are held up for our imitation as models of righteousness. With scarcely an exception, their examples were all on the side of the grossest immorality. This great preponderance of example in favor of immorality more than cancels all the good effects of the few valuable moral precepts of the Bible. As I have already said, therefore, and as I have promised to prove in a future lecture, the influence of the Bible as a whole is bound to be on the side of immorality, and, consequently, to have a very pernicious effect upon all who make its teachings the guide of their conduct. This fact is made clear by the cases before us.

Since, for the instruction of all who should ever read the Bible, God commanded Hosea, whom he gave to us as a model, to live in open lewdness with a common whore, no one can condemn whoredom without condemning God who thus taught us to practice it. Of necessity, Hosea's conduct was either right or wrong. If we pronounce it wrong, then, of necessity, we must charge God with having commanded that which was wrong. In other words, we must charge him with having been a bad God, and, since he never changes, we must charge him with being a bad God yet, totally unfit to be selected as an object of worship, or to be trusted as a teacher of morality. Better have no God at all.

If, on the other hand, we hold that Hosea's conduct was perfectly right and proper, then, since the moral nature of

an act is as unchangeable as God himself, we are bound to hold that common whoredom is still perfectly right and proper, especially when committed by priests and other holy men. In other words, we are bound either to honor whoredom, whether in the form of fornication or of adultery, or else dishonor a God who commanded it to be committed. And can teachings which involve such an alternative be otherwise than pernicious in their influence upon the moral natures of all who accept them? And now which horn of this dilemma will you choose? Will you hold that whoredom is a bad thing, and that, in commanding it to be committed, God proved himself to be a bad God, or will you hold that it is a good thing, and that, in commanding it to be committed, he did nothing inconsistent with the character of an infinitely good God?

“If brethren dwell together, and one of them die and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband’s brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband’s brother unto her. And it shall be, that the first-born which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his brother’s wife, then let his brother’s wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband’s brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband’s brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it and say, I like not to take her, then shall his brother’s wife come unto him, in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother’s house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed” (Deut. xxv, 5-10).

And now, let me ask, is it not a great and blasphemous error to teach, as the Bible here does, that God—that the infinitely great and glorious power that sustains, in all their unspeakably sublime revolutions, the countless millions of mighty worlds and systems of worlds that constitute the universe, ever so concentrated and limited itself as to be thus present, in either the form or the character of a person, at any one point on this one little world? Is it not a great and blasphemous error to teach, as the Bible here does, that this infinitely great and glorious power ever assumed the use of articulate speech, and that it ever gave the extremely ridiculous and immoral laws above set forth? Do you really believe that this infinitely great and glorious power ever thus ordered any man to leave his wife's bed and to "go in unto" his widowed sister-in-law in order to get her with child in the name of his deceased brother? Do you really believe that this great and glorious power ever ordered a widow to publicly pull off her brother-in-law's shoes, to spit in his face, and to commit other shamefully unlady-like and immodest acts simply because that brother-in-law refused to "go in unto her?" And do you hold that this command is at all consistent with those commands which prohibit the commission of fornication, adultery, and other sexual abuses?

This business of going "in unto" their sisters-in-law had to be transacted by married men the same as by bachelors. It had to be transacted, too, outside of the marriage relation. Had the man who transacted it married the woman, her child would have been reckoned his own, and not the child of her deceased husband. At any rate, no marriage ceremony was ever observed on such occasions. For obvious reasons, too, the business in question had to be transacted very soon after the death of the woman's husband, in order that the child resulting from the business might reasonably be reckoned his offspring.

Being thus performed outside of the marriage relation, and, usually, by parties between whom no bond of affec-

tion existed, this act of going “in unto her” was a pure matter of the lowest—of the most animal—form of lust, performed, as it is among cattle, for the sole purpose of breeding. It necessarily constituted a form of prostitution or whoredom, a form of either fornication or of adultery, and the command to perform it was a virtual abolishment of all the laws that had ever been enacted against these offenses. Of necessity, this disgusting custom—this brutish form of breeding—was either right and proper when God required it to be practiced, or wrong and improper. If it was right and proper at that time, then, since there can be no change in the moral nature of an act, it is bound to be equally right and proper at the present time. If, on the contrary, it was wrong and improper, then, of necessity, your God, in compelling men to practice it, was a bad God, and since, according to your own teachings, he is incapable of any change, he is bound to be, of equal necessity, an equally bad God still. I defy any escape from these conclusions. Which horn of this dilemma, then, will you take? Will you contend that the form of whoredom in question was right and proper, and that it is so yet, or will you condemn your adopted God who compelled men to practice it? Take whichever horn you may, the influence of the Bible, in regard to this matter, is undeniably on the side of that which is now almost universally regarded as a very degrading form of immorality.

Before leaving this part of my subject, I wish to ask of every married woman now present, what would you think of your God should he thus require your husband to leave your bed, and to “go in unto” his widowed sister-in-law? How would it be, especially if the widow in question were much younger and much more beautiful than yourself, and if—as would be very likely in the case of so charming a woman—his duty should require him to “go in unto her” a great many times? Could you be made to believe that your God, that the infinitely great and glorious power

that rules the universe, is capable of requiring such a duty at the hands of your own husband? If not, how can you so readily believe that he ever did require this duty at the hands of thousands of husbands who had wives just as good and as loving as you are? Were he to treat you in this way, could you love him, and would you serve him? If not, how can you profess to love and to serve him now, when you admit that he is guilty of thus treating thousands of other just as good women and as true wives? Would it not be just as right and proper for him to treat you in this way as it was or is for him to treat other women in the same way? How much proof would your own husband have to adduce, in such a case, to fully satisfy you that he was acting under God's orders? Did the Jewish wives have any such proof as you would require? If not, how did they know and how do you know that their husbands were acting under God's orders? Had they—have you—any proof on the subject except the unsupported word of a single man, a notorious polygamist, the Brigham Young of the Hebrews? Could any such proof satisfy you if your own husband were involved in the case? If not, how can it satisfy you in cases in which the husbands of other women are involved? If the Bible had been written by virtuous wives instead of by licentious men, do you believe it would have been filled, as it is, with teachings so grossly immoral?

“But all the women-children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves” (Num. xxxi, 18). Further on, we learn that there were thirty-two thousand of these virgins divided out on that occasion to be outraged at pleasure by the licentious priests, citizens, and soldiers, who had just finished butchering, in cold blood, the mothers, the married sisters, and the infant brothers of these same virgins. Here, then, we again have a complete refutation of all that is said in the Bible of God's disapprobation of fornication and adultery, as well as of all that is said of his mercy, his goodness, etc.

In this case, too, as in all others, God's peculiar people displayed a far greater readiness to obey those commands which enjoined the practice of immoral habits than they did to obey those which prohibited the practice of such habits.

In Ex. xx, 15, we read : "Thou shalt not steal." So in 1 Cor. vi, 10 : "Nor thieves . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God." Many other passages also condemn stealing. All of these, however, none of which is sustained by example, are more than counterbalanced by the following, which is sustained by the example of the whole nation that constituted God's peculiar people : "And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses : and they *borrowed* of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they *lent* unto them such things as they required : and they *spoiled* the Egyptians" (Ex. xii, 35, 36). In preceding passages, we learn that God had instructed his peculiar people to borrow all the valuables they could of their kind and confiding Egyptian guests, friends, and neighbors ; to professedly borrow them for only a few days, while attending a kind of camp-meeting or religious festival, and to then basely betray and rob the kind lenders by never returning the valuables thus treacherously obtained. We also learn that God had promised to aid his peculiar thieving favorites in this nefarious enterprise by miraculously giving them undeserved favor in the sight of those that they were to thus treacherously despoil. From the passage just quoted, we learn that this conspiracy, unparalleled in its unspeakable meanness, was literally carried out against the Egyptians.

You may claim, however, that this wholesale spoiling of their friends and neighbors, by the Hebrews, under the false pretense of merely borrowing articles of value, was not stealing. Perhaps it was not. But was it not a great deal worse than stealing? An ordinary thief obtains pos-

session of another man's money or property, without betraying that other man's confidence or his friendship. In this case, on the contrary, the plunderers deliberately selected, as the victims of their hellish—I mean their Godly—conspiracy, their guests, their neighbors, their best friends generally, those who loved them most, and who placed the fullest confidence in their honor, and who, consequently, were most ready to lend them whatever they might desire. These spoilers, too, took a most horribly cruel advantage of their Egyptian friends, by calling upon them to borrow jewelry, raiment, etc., at a time when these friends were overcome with an unutterable terror, and when they were bewailing the loss of their poor innocent first-borns, murdered, in the most horrible manner, by God himself, only a few moments before. At such a time, these poor bereaved people would lend anything they had to their false friends, the treacherous Hebrews. It was by thus cruelly bereaving them, that God brought them to lend liberally to his thieving band of special favorites. This he facetiously called giving “the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.” And was not this deliberate betrayal of confidence, this deliberate borrowing, from their best friends, of valuables, with full intent to abscond with them, a far meaner, a far more wicked act than is any form of ordinary stealing? Does not this case, in which your adopted God himself is represented as a principal actor, more than cancel all the good influence of all those passages which prohibit such crimes? Will anyone who believes this story ever try to be any better than it represents God as being? If not, will not such a man's moral nature be greatly dwarfed? And is not the Bible, then, a pernicious book? The command against stealing only forbids one Jew to steal from another Jew.

“So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith

the Lord God " (Ezek. xxxix, 10). Here God is represented as instigating to robbery his chosen people, who, under such a leader, naturally enough became hated, by all the neighboring nations, as a nation of robbers. All the weaker nations they were wont to rob by force. The stronger nations, such as the Egyptians, they were wont, as we have seen to rob by treachery. From these they borrowed, and then never repaid the things borrowed. And all these things they did by the express command of the God whom you now worship, and who, being utterly unchangeable, must still delight in having his worshipers rob other people, and even one another. Does not the Bible err in giving God such a character?

In Prov. xii, 22, we read: "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight." So in Tit. i, 2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Also in Col. iii, 9: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." These and many other passages clearly teach us that God is displeased with lying among men, and that he himself "cannot lie." By his recorded actions, however, which speak much louder than the empty words of these passages, it is clearly proved that he is not displeased with lying among men, and that he himself not only can lie, but, whenever it seems to be to his interest to do so, actually does lie.

Every Bible reader who is not totally blinded by priestcraft, must have noticed that, although his peculiar people, from Abraham down, were notoriously addicted to lying, God seldom if ever reproved them for this vice: that, on the contrary, he often instructed them to lie, and rewarded them for their skill in the practice of this vice. Such a reader must have noticed, too, that God himself often invented the lies which he wished his peculiar lying people to tell, as well as those which he himself proposed to tell.

In Gen. ii, 17, we read: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." When he spoke these words, God very well knew that Adam, to whom he spoke them, would not die on "the day" that he ate of the fruit in question. He very well knew that this primitive patriarch would live right on for nearly a thousand years, and then die of old age, and not of disease brought on by the eating of that, or of any other, improper fruit. At any rate, the fact that Adam did thus live right on is proof positive that God's words were false.

God also spoke a falsehood when, to Hezekiah, he said: "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live" (2 Kings xx, 1). This was said to Hezekiah, when he was "sick unto death," and when he inquired of the Lord how that sickness was to terminate. Hezekiah did not die, however, as the Lord said that he should; he recovered and lived fifteen more years. When he spoke the words in question, God very well knew that they were false.

God also told a falsehood when, to the Ninevites, he said: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jon. iii, 4). When he made this declaration, God very well knew that Nineveh would not be overthrown in forty days, or even in forty years. He spoke a wilful falsehood.

A much worse case, however, than any of these, we find recorded in the fourteenth chapter of Numbers. From this account, we learn that God bound himself by a solemn oath to lead the Hebrews safely through from Egypt to the land of Canaan which he had promised to give them. We learn further, that, so far from fulfilling this his sworn promise, he led them out into the wilderness, where they were utterly helpless, and then cruelly and treacherously destroyed them. When making this promise, he very well knew that he would never fulfil it. It is evident, therefore, that he meant to cruelly deceive the poor confiding people to whom he made it. He freely admits that, in

committing this atrocious act, he was guilty of a deliberate "breach of promise." Hear him! "Doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein. . . . But . . . your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness . . . and ye shall know my breach of promise" (Num. xiv, 30-34). Upon conduct so vile, no comment is necessary. If he actually did commit this atrocious act of deliberate perjury and cold-blooded murder, what kind of a being is the God that you worship? If he did not commit it, what kind of a book is the Bible, in which you trust, and which thus blasphemously charges him with horrible crimes of which he is innocent? Are you trying to force upon us a monstrously bad God, or an equally bad Bible? You are certainly trying to do the one or the other.

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micaiah, Paul, and several other high authorities of the Bible also represent God as a consummate liar, a deliberate and cruel deceiver. Hear them! "Then said I, Ah Lord God, surely thou hast greatly *deceived* this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace, whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul. O Lord, thou hast *deceived* me, and I *was deceived*: thou art stronger than I, and [by deceiving me, thou] hast prevailed. Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a *liar*, and as waters that fail?" (Jer. iv, 10; xx, 7; and xv, 18). "And if the prophet be *deceived* when he hath spoken a thing, *I the Lord have deceived that prophet*" (Ezek. xiv, 9). "I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall *entice* Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead. And one spake saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner. Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go out, and be a *lying spirit* in the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said, Thou shalt *entice* him, and thou shalt also *prevail*: go

out and do even so. [That is, go out and lie like the very devil.] Now therefore behold, the *Lord* hath put a *lying spirit* in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil against thee" (2 Chron. xviii, 18-22).

If the God that you worship actually did thus occasionally send out all the prophets of his chosen people with a lying spirit in their mouths, can we ever place any confidence in the truth of what those prophets teach? May not all the prophets whose works are found in the Bible have had a *lying spirit* put in *their* mouths by this unscrupulous and tricky Lord? Can such a God ever be trusted? And can those who worship him, and who try to be like him—only not half so good—ever be trusted? Can they be at all like him without being deliberate and consummate deceivers? Will they ever try to be any better than is the God they worship? Does not a *lying God* tend to make a *lying people*? Do not the champions of the Bible, then, greatly err in holding up this lying God as the model after which we are to fashion our lives and our characters? Can the teaching of such a God have any other than a very demoralizing effect upon society in general, and upon the young in particular?

Besides all this, does not the fact that God had a professional liar in his service, around his throne in heaven, prove, beyond all dispute, that he needs liars there, that he looks upon them with favor, and that those Bible writers lie who say that "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone?" How fearfully demoralizing are such teachings! No wonder we see so many Christians who seem to be trying to reach heaven upon the single merit of their wonderful skill in lying!

"And for this cause *God* shall send them *strong delusions* that they should believe a *lie*: that they all might be *damned*" (2 Thess. ii, 11, 12). This is the worst case of all. The God that you worship, and that you try so hard to be like, is here represented as deliberately and mali-

ciously preparing a lie and placing it before certain people, and as then sending them delusions so strong that they can not help believing it. He is represented as doing this, too, for the sole purpose of thus securing a pretext for damning those people. Does not this representation give him a character a thousand times worse than that which the Bible anywhere ascribes to the devil? Believing, as he doubtless did, that this was, indeed, the true character of the God that he worshiped, is it any wonder that Paul himself, in his great zeal for the glory of this God, occasionally put in a well-told lie, and that he expressed astonishment and indignation when he was regarded as a sinner for so doing? In his wounded innocence, he does not pretend to deny having lied, but, in justification of his lying, exclaims: "For if the *truth* of *God* hath more abounded through my *lie* unto his *glory*; why yet am I also judged as a *sinner*?" (Rom. iii, 7). Sure enough! Why should he, for the telling of so godly a lie, have been "judged as a sinner?" Is it any wonder that, taking the Bible as they did for their guide, the fathers of the Church almost universally taught that lying for the glory of God, and for the building up of the Church, was a meritorious act, which should never be neglected, and which rendered the actor more precious in the sight of God, more fit for the unspeakable joys of heaven, and more certain of attaining them? Is it any wonder that the word rascal, which was formerly used instead of the word apostle, and with the same meaning, finally came to signify a dishonest person? Is it any wonder that, for the same reason, the word priest is now fast coming to have this same idea of dishonesty involved in its meaning? Finally, is it any wonder that, so far as the rendering of the world any better is concerned, the Bible has proved an utter failure?

Besides all the cases that I have now noticed, and a thousand more similar cases that I might notice, all of which are extremely damaging to your God's character for veracity and fair dealing, the Bible charges him with hav-

ing rewarded the two midwives, Shiprah and Puah, for lying to Pharaoh; with having rewarded the harlot, Rahab, for lying to the inhabitants of Jericho; with having specially blessed and rewarded Jacob for lying to his own father; with having approved and blessed the lying of Abraham and Isaac when, for money, they mendaciously put out their own wives as their sisters to be the prostitute mistresses of other men; with having sent Samuel on a certain errand, the anointing of David, with a base lie in his mouth—in short, it charges him with having exhibited, on a thousand occasions, a character infinitely worse than was ever exhibited by the Neros, the Caligulas, or any others of the world's most hideous human monsters.

With this fearful record before us, we perceive that all those passages in the Bible which represent your adopted God—the ancient tutelary divinity of the Hebrews alone—as a good, truthful, and loving being, are simply the empty words of abject flatterers, who, had it been more to their interest to do so, would have heaped similar fulsome flatteries upon the devil himself. Such flatterers have always swarmed around the Neros, the Caligulas, the Molechs, the Juggernauts, and all the other hideous monsters, both human and deific, that the world has ever produced. Do not, therefore, I beg of you, O Christian!—do not longer commit the ruinous mistake of putting the Bible into the hands of your children, and of holding up to them as a model—as an object of adoration—this mythical monster of the ancient Hebrews. With your eyes now open to the utter falsity of such charges, you cannot, without wilful blasphemy, continue to charge such acts as I have described, against the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe—against the only true God that ever existed.

LECTURE THIRTEENTH.

ERRORS OF THE BIBLE.—(CONCLUDED.)

IN this lecture, as in the last, I shall point out passages in the Bible which are known to be errors because they are directly contradicted by, or are utterly inconsistent with, other passages; because they are totally at variance with certain well-known truths of science, or because their inevitable tendency is to promote immorality, indecency, or criminality among men.

“And the *Lord* appeared unto him [Abraham] in the plains of Mamre : and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, *three men* stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet *them* from the tent door, and he bowed himself toward the ground, and said, My *Lord*, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray *thee*, from *thy* servant: let a little water, I pray *you*, be fetched, and wash *your* feet, and rest *yourselves* under the tree” (Gen. xviii, 1-4).

Of necessity, “the Lord,” here mentioned, must have been either a single individual, or else a corporation or congress composed of two or more individuals. He could not possibly have existed in both of these two forms at once. The Bible, therefore, undeniably errs either when it represents him, as at some times it does, as a single individual, or else when it represents him, as at other times it does, as a corporation or congress composed of at least three distinct individuals.

The Hebrew Elohim, which is here translated Lord, is a noun in the plural number. Of itself, this fact proves that the *Lord* in question was a *corporation* or *congress*, composed of *several persons*, and not a *single individual*.

In the passages which I have just quoted, the Elohim, or Lord, is certainly represented thus as a corporation or congress composed of at least three individuals. When addressing these individuals in their *united* or *corporate* capacity, Abraham very properly applies to the single body which they compose the singular terms, "my *Lord*," "*thy*," "*thee*," etc. When addressing them, however, in their *separate* or *individual* capacities, he with equal propriety, applies to them the plural terms, "*you*," "*your*," and "*yourselves*." Stopping, passing away, etc., were acts which, as a single body, the whole company could perform. When speaking of these acts, therefore, Abraham addresses the whole company as a single body, and, as a matter of course, uses the singular terms which I have noticed. When speaking of washing their feet, resting themselves, etc., however, acts which could not be performed by the whole company as a single body, he addresses them individually, and, as a matter of course, uses the plural terms to which I have called your attention. As a single body, the company had no feet, Consequently, it could not wash its feet. The same is equally true of its muscles, its stomach, etc. As a single body, the company had none of these things, and hence could not, as such, rest, eat, etc. The feet, the muscles, the stomachs, all the physical organs, of necessity, belonged individually to the various persons that composed the company. In speaking of any of the functions of any of these organs, therefore, Abraham had, of course, to speak of them, just as he did, as acts pertaining to individuals, and not as acts pertaining to the company as a whole.

This same idea of plurality, in the term Elohim, or Lord, is also clearly conveyed in the following passages: "And they [the Lord or whole company of three persons spoken of in their individual capacities] said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he [Abraham] said, Behold, in the tent. And he [the Lord or whole company spoken of in

their corporate capacity] said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and lo! Sarah thy wife shall bear a son" (Gen. xviii, 9, 10). "And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness. And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as *one* of *us*, to know good and evil" (Gen. i, 26; iii, 22). "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the *Father*, the *Word* [or Son], and the *Holy Ghost*" (1 John v, 7).

All these passages, however, which thus so clearly teach that the Lord was a corporation or congress composed of several individuals, are totally at variance with the following passages, which just as clearly teach that he was only a single individual. "And the men [the whole three of whom I have already spoken] rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. . . . And the men [only two of them, as we learn further on] turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the *Lord*" (who now consisted of only the one remaining man) (Gen. xviii, 16, 22). "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a *man* with him until the breaking of the day. . . . And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen *God* [the man with whom he had just been wresting face to face], and my life is preserved" (Gen. xxxii, 24, 30). "The *Lord* is a *man* of war" (Ex. xv, 3).

That the one set or the other of these passages, if not both sets, are erroneous in their teachings, is so clear that no further comment upon the subject is necessary. Indeed, in addition to the very damaging fact that they plainly contradict one another's teachings in regard to the singular or the plural form of God, these passages are all proved to be erroneous by the fact that, together with their contexts, they all teach things monstrously absurd, horribly blasphemous, and utterly impossible, by the fact that they all represent this infinitely great and glorious power or force that rules the universe as so con-

tracting itself that it occupied less than half a dozen cubic feet of space here on earth; by the fact that they all represent this infinitely great and glorious power, this eternal force which, as an essential property of matter, must, of necessity, be present wherever matter itself exists, as assuming the form and the character of a *man*, or the forms and the characters of several different *men*, as traveling about the country on foot like a common tramp, as growing weary and hungry, as having dirty feet, as washing its feet, resting itself in the shade of a tree, and dining heartily upon milk, bread, and veal; as being so ignorant that it did not know the habits of the people of a city in its immediate neighborhood, as being beaten in an argument by Abraham, and in a wrestling match by Jacob, as going about the country making ninety-year-old women breed, etc.

“Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. . . . And he [Saul] took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed *all* the *people* with the edge of the sword” (1 Sam. xv, 3, 8). From these passages, which blasphemously make a monstrous murderer of God, of the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe, we learn that Saul slew *all* of the *Amalekites*, except Agag their king, who, as we learn further on, was soon afterward murdered in cold blood by God’s holy prophet, the famous Samuel. If, therefore, this account be true, the Amalekites were, on this occasion, entirely exterminated. From 1 Sam. xxvii, 8–11, however, we learn that only a few years later, and during the very same reign “David and his men went up and invaded the Amalekites. And David smote the land, and left neither *man* nor *woman* alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish. And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath,

saying, Lest they tell on us." The murderer's motto, "Dead men tell no tales," was probably learned from this prince of murderers, this man so pre-eminently after God's own heart. Did David thus invade, plunder, and murder the dead, the people that Saul had "utterly destroyed" only a few years before?

It seems that when pursued by Saul, who for very good reasons wished to slay him, David took refuge with the king of Gath, who received him with truly royal hospitality, and gave him a whole city for the accommodation of himself and his men. In return for this magnificent hospitality, of which he stood so greatly in need, it seems that David, with God's full approbation, occupied a portion of his time in plundering his benefactor's people, the Amalekites and others. It seems also that, still with God's full approbation, he was accustomed to murder, in cold blood, every man, woman, and child of those that he plundered, in order to prevent them from reporting his monstrous treachery to his kind benefactor. Thus, for the second time, were the Amalekites utterly exterminated. They do not seem, however, to have staid dead after this second killing any better than they did after the first. They were up again, it seems, and fighting only a few months afterwards. "And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the *Amalekites* had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and burned it with fire" (1 Sam. xxx, 1). The "third day" here mentioned was the third day after David's departure from Gath, where, at the very farthest, he remained only a few months. These twice "utterly destroyed Amalekites," therefore, must have been a very enterprising people to thus invade "the south and Ziklag" so soon after their second utter destruction. What think my opponents?

Instead of killing all of David's women and children, as he had killed all of theirs, to prevent them from giving information, these much-injured heathens—these twice "utterly destroyed" Amalekites—simply carried those

women and children away as captives. In doing this, they exhibited a degree of mercy and forbearance never exhibited by the worshipers of the Bible's bloody God. Taking David's women and children as captives was certainly a very moderate retaliation for the wholesale and treacherous butchering by him of all their own women and children.

When they returned from their own marauding expedition against their neighbors, and found their own city burnt and their own families carried away, "David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and *wept*, until they had no more *power* to *weep*" (1 Sam. xxx, 4). How wonderfully tender-hearted these cold-blooded butchers of women and children—these special favorites of your own bloody God—became whenever any misfortune fell upon themselves! After bellowing thus, like so many hungry calves, "until they had no *power* to" bellow, David and his men very naturally and very wisely went in pursuit of the captors of their women and children, those twice "utterly destroyed" Amalekites. "And David smote them from the twilight even until the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled" (1 Sam. xxx, 17). Whether the "four hundred young men" who wisely "fled," on this occasion, were, or were not, all the Amalekites that escaped this third killing, I do not pretend to know. From 2 Sam. viii, 11, 12, however, we learn that, only a few years later, they were sufficiently numerous to be regarded as a nation, and that they were again subdued and plundered by that enterprising and unscrupulous robber, King David. From 1 Chron. iv, 42, 43, we further learn that these much-destroyed people were finally all destroyed by the sons of Simeon. "And some of them, even of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to Mount Seir. . . . And they smote the *rest* of the *Amalekites* that were escaped, and dwelt there unto this day." And yet these irrepressible Amal-

ekites seem to have survived even this final utter destruction, since, according to his own account, the great historian, Josephus, was one of their descendants.

Since it is utterly impossible for every man, woman, and child of an entire people to be slain on each of three or four different occasions, we know that some, if not all, of these several accounts of the total destruction of the Amalekites, at different times, are bound to be false. Indeed, even if this extremely grave objection could be explained away, we would still know that they were all false from the fact that, with their contexts, they all represent God as ordering, or at least approving, the indiscriminate and cold-blooded butchery of men, women, and children, for a pretended offense committed four hundred years before they were born, or simply for the purpose of preventing them from giving information against their butchers. God is simply another name for the infinite force that eternally inheres in matter, and that sustains the universe; and we know that this force—this essential property of matter—never either ordered or approved any such butcheries.

When David numbered the people of Israel and of Judah, how many men did he find capable of bearing arms? To this question, we have two utterly irreconcilable answers. 2 Sam. xxiv, 9, says that “there were in Israel *eight hundred thousand* valiant men that drew the sword; and [that] the men of Judah were *five hundred thousand* men.” 1 Chron. xxi, 5, says that “all they of Israel were a *thousand thousand* and an *hundred thousand* men that drew sword: and [that] Judah was *four hundred three-score and ten thousand* men that drew sword.” Between these two answers, there is an utterly irreconcilable discrepancy of three hundred thousand men in the number returned for Israel, and one of thirty thousand in the number returned for Judah. One or the other of these answers, therefore, is bound to be false. Will the champions of the Bible please tell us which one is correct?

Will they also please inform us how it happened that, according to each of these irreconcilable accounts, Israel had an exact number of hundreds of thousands, and that Judah had an exact number of tens of thousands? Will they please inform us further what there was in this numbering of the people, so wicked that it should have caused all the forces which, as essential properties, inhere in matter, and which, when all taken together, are, by personification, called God, to become so incensed against David that they mercilessly murdered seventy thousand innocent persons who had never had anything to do in the matter?

The errors in regard to this matter, however, do not end here. In 2 Sam. xxiv, 24, we learn that David bought a threshing-floor of *Araunah* for *fifty shekels* of silver. In 1 Chron. xxi, 25, however, we learn that this statement is false in every particular; that David bought the threshing-floor of *Ornan* for *six hundred shekels* of gold. Will the champions of the Bible please inform us which one of these two utterly irreconcilable accounts we must believe in order to escape eternal damnation? Will they also please inform us whether, in order to escape this damnation—whatever it may be—we are bound to believe 2 Sam. xxiv, 13, which says that, on this occasion, God offered David *seven* years of famine, or 1 Chron. xxi, 12, which says that only *three* years were thus offered?

“And David took from him [Hadadezer] . . . seven *hundred* horsemen” (2 Sam. viii, 4). “And David took from him [Hadadezer] . . . seven *thousand* horsemen” (1 Chron. xviii, 4). In order to be saved—whatever that means—how many horsemen must we believe that David took on this occasion? And how many members must we believe there were in Jacob’s family at the time of his going down into Egypt? Gen. xlvi, 27, says: “. . . All the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt, were three score and *ten*.” Acts vii, 14, says: “Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his

kindred, three score and *fifteen* souls." So of the stalls which Solomon had for his horses. How many must we believe there were of them? "And Solomon had *forty thousand* stalls of horses for his chariots" (1 Kings iv, 26). "And Solomon had *four thousand* stalls for his horses and chariots" (2 Chron. ix, 25). How many did he really have? Dare any champion of the Bible attempt to answer this question?

Besides all these things, shall those who seek God early find him? "Those that seek me early *shall* find me" (Prov. viii, 17). "They shall seek me early, but they shall *not* find me" (Prov. i, 28). Can both of these answers be true? If not, which one of them is true? And if we fail to believe the one that is false, will we be eternally damned as infidels? Must we believe a lie simply because we chance to find it in the Bible? And how shall we act toward other men? "And as ye would that men *should do to you*, do ye also *to them likewise*" (Luke vi, 31). "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and *slay* every man his *brother*, and every man his *companion*, and every man his *neighbor*" (Ex. xxxii, 27). In thus treacherously slaying his brothers, his companions, and his neighbors, who had never done him any injury, would any man be doing unto them as he would have them do unto him? If God should give you both of these commands at once, could you, and would you, obey them both?

And how must we feel toward our wives, our brothers, and our other relatives? "Husbands, *love* your wives" (Eph. v, 25). "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps. cxxxiii, 1). "He that *loveth* his brother abideth in the *light*, and there is none occasion of *stumbling* in him. But he that *hateth* his brother is in *darkness*" (1 John ii, 10, 11). "Whosoever *hateth* his brother, is a *murderer*: and ye know that no *murderer* hath *eternal life* abiding in him" (1 John iii, 15).

From these passages, we learn that we must *love* our wives, our brothers, and our other relatives, and that, if we *hate* them, we can never attain eternal life. From the following passages, however, we learn that we must *hate* them, and that, if we *love* them, we can never attain eternal life. "If any man come to me, and *hate not* his *father*, and *mother*, and *wife*, and *children*, and *brethren*, and *sisters*, . . . he cannot be my *disciple*" (Luke xiv, 26). "For I am come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. x, 35, 36). From one of these sets of passages, we learn that if we do hate our relatives, we will go to hell. From the other set, we learn that, if we do not hate them, we will go to hell. In any view of the case, therefore, we are bound to have a hell-of-a-time.

"For God so loved the *world*, that *he* gave his only begotten Son [Jesus], that *whosoever* believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the *world*; but that the *world* through him might be saved" (John iii, 16, 17). From this passage, we learn that it was *God* who *gave Jesus* for the salvation of men, and that the gift was for the benefit of the *whole world*. From the following passage, however, we learn that this is all false, that it was not *God* who *gave Jesus*, but *Jesus himself* who *gave himself* for the salvation of men, and that the gift was not for the benefit of the *whole world*, but for that of the *church alone*. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the *Church*, and *gave himself* for it" (Eph. v, 25). And now, will the champions of the Bible please inform us by whom, and for whom, Jesus actually was given? Dare they even try to do this?

Besides all of these things, how shall we feel toward our neighbors, and how shall we treat them? "Thou shalt *love thy neighbor* as *thyself*" (Lev. xix, 18). "Thou shalt not *defraud thy neighbor*, neither *rob him*" (Lev. xix,

13). "Devise not *evil* against thy *neighbor*" (Prov. iii, 29). "Speak ye every man the *truth* to his *neighbor*" (Zech. viii, 15). "Let every one of us *please* his *neighbor*" (Rom. xv, 2). From these passages, we learn that we must love our neighbors; that we must deal with them truthfully, honestly, and kindly; and that we must avoid everything that could, in any way, either injure or offend them. From the following passages, however, we learn that we are to do none of these things; that, on the contrary, we are to deceive our neighbors, to rob them, to slay them, and in every other possible way to injure and displease them. "But every woman [the women were more likely to be trusted with such things than were the men] shall *borrow* of her *neighbor*, . . . jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and [by basely absconding with these borrowed goods thus treacherously obtained] ye shall *spoil* the Egyptians" (Ex. iii, 22). "I set all men every one *against* his *neighbor*" (Zech. viii, 10). "Put every man his sword by his side, . . . and *slay* every man his *neighbor*" (Ex. xxxii, 27).

"Thou shalt not *kill*" (Ex. xx, 13). "And he that *killeth* any man shall surely be *put* to *death*" (Lev. xxiv, 17). *Murderers* shall have their part in the *lake* [if there be any such lake] which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. xxi, 8). From these passages we learn that we must not kill; that if we do kill, we "shall surely be put to death;" and that, as murderers, we shall have our "part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." From the following passages, on the contrary, we learn that we must kill; that God's blessing depends upon our killing our sons, our brothers, our companions, and our neighbors; and that a failure to kill is an offense sufficient to excite God's inappeasable wrath. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, . . . Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and *spare* them *not*; but *slay* both *man* and *woman*, *infant*, and *suckling*, ox and sheep,

camel and ass." This command was given to Saul, who, as we learn further on, in obedience to the command, "utterly destroyed all the people [of Amalek] with the edge of the sword." Saul, however, did spare and take as a captive one person, Agag, and, for this act of humanity, God was so angry with him that he rent from him his kingdom, and had him, his three brave and noble-minded sons, and many thousands of innocent persons slaughtered. (See the entire fifteenth and thirty-first chapters of 1 Samuel and the thirteenth verse of the tenth chapter of 1 Chronicles.) Horribly cruel as this wholesale and unprovoked slaughter, in cold blood, of all the untold thousands of inoffensive and defenseless men, women, and children of an entire nation, proves him to have been, Saul was, nevertheless, possessed of too much humanity to be "a man after God's own heart," or to be permitted to reign long as king of God's peculiar people. Only a human monster, only a fiend of blood and treachery, like David, could be "a man after God's own heart," or could, satisfactorily, reign as king of God's peculiar people—only a man who, like David, "saved neither man nor woman alive," of those against whom he made his marauding expeditions; only a man who, like David, to render the fate of his victims more terrible, had them, men, women, and children, tortured to death, by dragging harrows over their prostrate bodies, by lacerating their quivering flesh with saws, by lopping off their limbs with axes, and by suffocating them in the heated flues of brick-kilns; only a man who, like David, would sometimes amuse himself, and gratify his worse than hellish cruelty, by houghing, and otherwise maiming, thousands at a time of poor, harmless, captured horses. To please God, we must kill.

"If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, . . . thou shalt surely *kill* him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to

death " (Deut. xiii, 6-9). What could be a more horrible form of murder than would be the butchering thus, in cold blood, of those who love us most dearly, simply because, for what they believed to be for our own good, they had tried to get us to join them in what they believed to be the true religion—in the worship of Jesus, or some other god, like him, unknown to the Jews? To please God, we must *kill*.

"And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host [because they had saved the women and the children of the Midianites alive]. . . . And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved *all* the *women alive*? Now therefore *kill* every male among the little ones, and *kill* every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women-children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves " (Num. xxxi, 14-18). I do not know which was the more atrocious, the cold-blooded butchery of all the male infants, and of all the married women, or the shocking purposes of outrage and ravishment for which the virgins were saved alive. To please God, we must *kill*.

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and *slay* every man his *brother*, and every man his *companion*, and every man his *neighbor*. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his *son* [by foully murdering him], and upon his *brother*, that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day " (Ex. xxxii, 27, 29). In order to please God and to gain his blessing, we must *kill*—*kill* our *sons*, our *brothers*, our *companions*, and our *neighbors*. A strange way, truly, to gain God's blessing!

"And [Jesus] came and preached *peace* to you which were far off, and to them that were nigh " (Eph. ii, 17.) "Think not that I am come to send *peace* on earth; I came not to send *peace*, but a *sword* " (Matt. x, 34). After reading both of these passages, will the champions of the

Bible please inform us whether Jesus did, or did not, come to preach or send peace on earth?

“Three years reigned he [Abijah] in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Maachah, the daughter of *Abishalom*” (1 Kings xv, 2. “And after her he [Abijah’s father] took Maachah, the daughter of *Absalom*, which bare him Abijah” (2 Chron. xi, 20). “He [Abijah] reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name also was Michaiah [was it?] the daughter of *Uriel* of Gibeah” (2 Chron. xiii, 2). From these passages we learn that Abijah’s mother was the daughter of three different men, Abishalom, Absalom, and Uriel. Did these men all beget her at once, or did they work by turns? Will the champions of the Bible please answer?

“And *Jacob* begat *Joseph* the husband of Mary” (Matt. i, 16). “And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being [as was supposed] the son of *Joseph*, which was the son of *Heli*” (Luke iii, 23). From these passages, we learn that Joseph was the son of two different fathers, Jacob and Heli. How much of him did each one of them beget? And, in begetting him, did they both work at once, or only one at a time? Who can tell? Some theologians attempt to escape the difficulty involved in this matter by assuming that Heli, being from some cause unable to beget himself a son, nevertheless managed to become a happy father, by having his friend Jacob do the begetting for him. This is, indeed, a beautiful explanation. Why cannot men, in the true spirit of brotherly love, thus aid one another at the present time? Would any of my opponents be unwilling to render such aid to a needy brother?

“Two and *twenty* years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem” (2 Kings viii 26). “*Forty* and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem” (2 Chron. xxii, 2). Can both of these contradictory passages possibly be true? From the context, we learn that

Ahaziah succeeded to the throne immediately after the death of his father, who, at the time of his decease, was only forty years of age. The former of these two passages, therefore, makes Ahaziah, who was the youngest of several sons, only eighteen years younger than his own father. The latter makes him two years older than his own father. The former states something that is not very reasonable; the latter, something that is clearly impossible. And must we, indeed, believe both of these utterly irreconcilable passages, or roast forever in the flames of hell? If not, which one may we reject?

In the fourth chapter of Judges, we have an account of a terrible battle between the Hebrews and the Canaanites. The latter people being utterly overthrown, their commander, Sisera, all alone, fled toward the tent of Heber, a friend of his, who belonged to a neutral tribe. As he approached this tent, the wife of his friend came out to meet him, entreated him to come into the tent, and assured him that while he was under her protection he had nothing to fear. Accepting what he believed to be the true hospitality of a real friend, he did enter the tent, and being very weary, soon fell asleep. Then he was foully murdered by this treacherous female fiend, Jael, the wife of his friend. The twenty-first verse says: "Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples and fastened it unto the ground, for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died." And this was the way to please God.

When considered in connection with all its circumstances of monstrous treachery, violated hospitality, and cold-blooded deliberation, this murder, in the hideousness of its atrocity, stands without a parallel in the whole world's annals of crime. Had the Hebrews been beaten, and had their leader, in like manner, sought refuge in her tent, this foul monstrosity in the form of a woman would, in the same way, have murdered him, in order to win

favor with his victorious enemies. What she did was done from the very lowest and most selfish of motives, and not from any love for God or for his people. And yet the Bible, which, as you contend, contains nothing but truth, represents the God that you worship, the God that you strive to be like, as being wonderfully pleased with the unspeakably foul murder, committed on this occasion, by this hideous female monstrosity. Through his prophetess, Deborah, he is represented as saying: "Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent" (Jud. v, 24).

The Bible is certainly guilty of a fearful error in thus holding up, for our admiration and imitation, and as a sure means of gaining God's approbation and his richest blessings, this most foul of all acts of treachery, this most monstrous of all cold-blooded murders. Unfortunately, this story, unlike many of the other immoral and crime-encouraging stories of the Bible, stands uncontradicted by any other passages. There is not, in the whole Bible, a single word that goes to prove that this shocking story is not true, or that your God is not, as it represents him to be, a hideous murder-approving monster. It is no wonder, therefore, that the believers in the religion of the Bible have always been noted for their treachery and their thirst for blood. It is no wonder that they have always regarded the killing of infidels, heretics, and heathens, by means the most foul, by tortures the most terrible, as one of the most acceptable methods of doing God service. A book containing teachings so derogatory to the character of God, so destructive to all that is noble in the nature of man, cannot possibly have any other than a very pernicious influence upon the moral characters of all who read it and believe it.

"And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle" (Jud. xiv, 19). From this

passage, we learn that “the Spirit of the *Lord*” is simply the spirit of *murder*; and we are led to ask whether all murders are, or are not, committed under the influence of this same spirit. Samson, it seems, of whom this language is spoken, and who was a notoriously “fast” young man, had laid a wager, with certain other sporting characters of his own class, that they could not guess a certain riddle which he propounded. He very imprudently told his riddle to a certain lewd woman of whom he was enamored, and she, as might have been expected, treacherously told it to the other sporting characters with whom he had laid the wager. In this way, Samson lost the wager, which was thirty changes of garments, and which he did not have the means to pay. In order, therefore, to help him out of his difficulty, your God, who seems, formerly, to have been himself something of a sporting character, inspired Samson to murder thirty innocent and unsuspecting persons, and, from their dead bodies, to strip off the necessary number of garments with which to pay his extremely foolish, if not monstrously wicked, wager.

At another time, “the Spirit of the *Lord*” came upon him, and inspired him to butcher, at a single job, and with no weapon except the jaw-bone of an ass, a thousand well-armed men. At still another time, this same “Spirit of the *Lord*,” this same spirit of murder, came upon him, and inspired him to kill three thousand persons—men, women, and children—by overturning upon them, with his naked hands, one of the largest buildings ever erected.

No possible good either could, or did, result to the world, from these wholesale and monstrous murders. Besides this, except when the “Spirit of God” was upon him impelling him to revel in the life-blood of his fellow-men, Samson was a very sensual man, lying around much of the time, in the most open and shameless manner, with notoriously lewd women. And yet, by the Bible and its champions, this infamous debauchee and cut-throat is held up for our admiration and imitation as a model of

excellence—as one of God’s special favorites—as a man who, from before his conception, had been an object of God’s special care, angels and miracles having, in advance, announced his conception and his birth of a hitherto barren woman, and also his wonderful character.

Here, then, in representing as peculiarly pleasing to God, the character and the conduct of this unspeakably foul crime-hardened and blood-blackened monster, the Bible again commits an error fearfully destructive to the moral sense of those who believe the story. Such persons will naturally incline to admire, and, as far as possible, to imitate the life and the character of this God-favored hero. How can teachings so monstrous in their immorality, and so horrible in their blasphemy, have any other than an extremely pernicious influence upon the moral natures of the people? It were well if this monstrous story were contradicted in some other part of the Bible. Unfortunately, however, while all the good stories and other good teachings of the Bible are rendered null and void by being thus contradicted, the extremely bad stories, like this and the one about Heber’s wife, the monstrously immoral teachings all remain unweakened by any such contradictions.

Since there is no change in God, it is evident that he must, of necessity, still take delight in the same things that so greatly pleased him in the time of Samson. It is also evident that, of equal necessity, the inevitable effect of the coming of his “Spirit” upon men must be the same now that it was then. It is evident that, when this “Spirit” comes upon men now, it is bound to impel them, as it impelled Samson, to revel in the blood of murder. Guiteau had a correct view of this God’s character. I defy any escape from these conclusions. But do you really believe that the infinite power that eternally inheres in matter—the infinite power that rules the universe—the infinite power that you call God, and that you worship,

ever does, or ever did, thus impel men, irresistibly, to the commission of the most horrible of murders?

“Thou shalt not suffer a *witch to live*” (Ex. xxii, 18). This law or commandment involves the very climax of blasphemy. It represents God as an ignorant and superstitious fellow who believes in witchcraft, and who fears witches. It is also monstrously mischievous in its influence upon the people. It keeps alive, among them, an extremely degrading superstition, and has already caused the death, by the most terrible of all known tortures, of hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women, and children. It has brought fear, darkness, and despair to untold thousands of homes that, but for its baleful influence, would have been the abodes of light, of hope, and of gladness. How can the champions of the Bible continue to defend so monstrous an error?

In the fifth chapter of Numbers, we find a law, said to have been given by the God that you worship, for the trial of such women as happen to be guilty of the terrible crime of being cursed with jealous husbands. This law provides that, whenever a man finds himself possessed of the green-eyed monster, jealousy, and yet is unable to adduce any proof of guilt against his wife, he shall bring her to the priest, who, after the performance of many silly ceremonies, is required to compel her to drink a bowl of water made foul with filth from the floor of the tabernacle, and with other nauseous and deleterious substances. The twenty-seventh verse says: “And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that, if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter [who can know that it becomes bitter?], and her belly shall swell and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people.”

How this law could be executed, and the woman still remain alive, “a curse among her people,” I cannot conceive, since there was, already in force, another law which

required that “the adulteress shall surely be put to death” (Lev. xx, 10). Did the swelling of the belly and rotting of the thigh, or did they not, constitute positive proof of the guilt of the unfortunate women who were subjected to this barbarous mode of trial? If they did, why were the guilty parties permitted to live? Why were they not put to death, as required by the Levitical law just mentioned? If they did not, what was the value of this mode of trial? Was it any test at all of either guilt or innocence? Were not innocent women just as likely to suffer from its action, and to become “a curse among” their people, as were those who were guilty? Be all this as it may, however, what could be more blasphemous than to thus charge God with believing in the infallible power of this the lowest and the most abominable of all forms of fetichism, and with compelling his peculiar people to practice it? This form of fetichism—the lowest and grossest of all forms of superstition—is now being abandoned by all mankind, except some of the most hopelessly degraded tribes of Africa. Some of these tribes still try persons, suspected of witchcraft, or other crimes, by compelling them to swallow a poison of so deadly a nature that nearly all who take it, whether they be innocent or guilty, instantly fall down and expire. All who thus perish are, of course, supposed to be guilty. Indeed, after taking the test poison, or fetich, they rarely live long enough to even assert their own innocence, much less to prove it? And do you really believe that the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe, and that you idolatrously worship under the name of God, was ever, as here represented, a degraded fetichist?

This most horrible form of fetichism, like every other form of that monstrous superstition, consists in attributing deific power and intelligence to certain inanimate objects, such as stones, plants, medicines, etc. In the case before us, the foul drugged water, like a kind of god, was supposed to possess a certain virtue, or species

of intelligence, by which it was enabled to discover, and, by a difference in its mode of operation, to make known to men, the guilt or the innocence of a woman charged with adultery. It will not do for the champions of the Bible to claim that, in this case, the guilt or the innocence of the woman on trial was discovered and made known by the miraculous interposition of God's own direct power. The Bible does not claim any such thing. It does not claim anything miraculous in the whole matter. It makes the test as pure a form of fetichism as was any ever practiced by the lowest tribes of African savages. It attributes the whole detective virtue or power to the fetich alone, to the drugged water, and not to God. If, by his own direct power, miraculously exercised, God had proposed himself to discover, and to make known the guilt or the innocence of a woman charged with adultery, would he have required the aid of a priest, or of a fetich, of "the water that causeth the curse?" If, in this case, the detective operation was performed by God himself, was he, or was he not, materially aided in that operation by the large dose of drugged water which the woman had swallowed? If he was, might he not now be greatly aided, in his operation of converting sinners, by administering to those sinners large doses of certain powerful drugs? Might he not be enabled to convert, all at once, an entire congregation of the toughest old sinners, if, to all the members of that congregation, were administered, at the same time, powerful doses of tartar-emetic, croton-oil, or cantharides? I would that, for their own satisfaction, and for the information of the world, a congregation of my most sinful opponents would try this truly interesting experiment upon themselves.

I do not suppose that even the champions of the Bible will now have the effrontery to contend that the moral guilt or innocence of a man would, at the present time, in any way, modify the effect which a dose of calomel, strychnine, or any other powerful drug, would have upon him

if taken into his stomach. And yet the effects of such drugs, when taken into the stomach, are evidently bound to be the same now that they always were. Since, then, under the same physical conditions, they now affect the innocent and the guilty alike, it is evident that they have always affected them thus alike. Whatever, therefore, may have been the nature of the drugged water in question, it could not have been, and, consequently, was not, in any way, modified, in its purely physical effect, when taken into the stomach, by the moral guilt or the moral innocence of the party taking it. Its effect could have been modified only by physical conditions. If, when taken into the stomach by a woman, its natural tendency was to cause her belly to swell and her thigh to rot, it must have had this tendency, all the same, whether the woman had, or had not, been guilty of adultery. If the woman had had sexual intercourse with a man, and if that sexual intercourse had, in any way, changed her physical condition, then this changed physical condition might have modified the effect of the drugged water, when taken into her stomach. This modification of effect, however, would have been exactly the same whether the change in her physical condition had been produced by sexual intercourse with her husband, or with some other man. The drugged water could not possibly have gone to the records and ascertained whether she was, or was not, legally married to the man who, by sexual intercourse with her, had produced, in her physical condition, the change that tended to modify its own effect upon her, when taken into her stomach.

No matter, however, how innocent a woman may have been whose jealous husband had her dosed with this foul, drugged water, if her belly swelled, as it nearly always did, and her thigh rotted, as it also nearly always did, no one could ever be made to believe that she was otherwise than guilty. On the other hand, no matter how guilty the woman may have been who was subjected to this form of

trial, if her belly failed, as it sometimes did, to swell, and her thigh to rot, no one could be made to believe that she was otherwise than innocent. This test, this fetich, supposed to have been prescribed by God himself, was believed to be infallible. And yet, by its action, untold thousands of the purest and most virtuous wives were made poor, suffering, and utterly hopeless outcasts for ever. With their swelled bellies and their rotted thighs, they were "a curse among" their people. Even their best friends turned from them with unutterable loathing, regarding them as vile adulteresses who were being slowly consumed by the fearful curse of God. No one will ever know the untold suffering to innocent women, and to their families, that was caused by the action of this monstrous law, the practice of this horrible form of fetichism. And while so many innocent women were thus destroyed by the most fearful tortures, mental and physical, many a real adulteress stood this test, and was restored to the arms of her now satisfied husband, and to the bosom of the now approving congregation of the Lord.

If we now had a drug which, when taken into the stomach, would inevitably cause the belly of a guilty woman to swell, and her thigh to rot, how many of our women, who profess to believe every word of the Bible, would have confidence enough in the counteracting influence of their own innocence to make them willing to take a dose of this drug? Would any one of them risk the experiment? Would any one of them expect the drug to examine the records and ascertain whether she was or was not legally married to the man whose sexual embraces she may have received? Would any one of them expect the drug to perceive any difference between her stomach and the stomach of a woman whose marriage was not legal, or to make any difference in its action upon her because of the legality of her marriage? Would not all of our women, on the contrary, expect such a drug to operate, as does any other drug, the same upon the innocent and

the guilty? Do they, then, with all their pretended faith in the Bible, really believe that the God they worship, the infinite power that rules the universe, was ever so degraded a fetichist as to believe in the power of a drug to discover the guilt of an adulterous woman, and, by intelligently modifying its action upon her, make her guilt known to others? Dare the champions of the Bible bring this horribly blasphemous charge of fetichism against God, by contending that he originated, or that he ever approved, the monstrous law in question? If they dare do this, will they please inform us why it was that he so unjustly discriminated against the women, why it was that, when a woman became jealous of her husband, she was not permitted to have him dosed with the belly-swelling, thigh-rotting, curse-water in question? If we had a drug now, which, if taken into the stomach, would thus infallibly discover and fearfully punish the guilt of the man taking it, how many of my opponents would dare take a dose of it?

“ And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God: for whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or lame, or that hath a flat nose, or anything superfluous, or a man that is broken-footed, or broken-handed, or crook-backed, or a dwarf, or that a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken, he hath a blemish, he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God ” (Lev, xxi, 16, 20). “ He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord. A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord ; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord ” (Deut. xxiii, 1, 2).

And now I challenge the champions of the Bible to point out, among the savages of any part of the world, a

single law, or a single custom, more cruel and unjust to its victims, more unhumanizing in its influence upon the people, or more blasphemous in its reflections upon God, than was this law for the wholesale proscription, in their dearest rights, of all those who, by either birth or accident, were so unfortunate as to be afflicted with any physical defect or deformity. Liars, thieves, murderers, criminals of every description, if free from all physical blemish, were permitted to enter freely into the congregation of the Lord. The very best of men, however, were at once deprived of this, the dearest of all their privileges, if they were so unfortunate as to become lame, blind, or in any other way physically imperfect. Instead of being permitted, as it should have been, to bring to its victim increased sympathy and kindness, every such misfortune was treated as an unpardonable crime. Its victim was rendered tenfold more unfortunate by being thus treated as something that was hateful in the sight of God, as something unfit to associate with any but the outcasts from society.

Moses, through whom God is said to have given this inhuman law to the world, is admitted, on all hands, to have been a notorious polygamist, liar, thief, and murderer. And yet, blackened as he was by all manner of crimes, he is represented, by the Bible and its champions, as having been, above all other men, the favorite and the companion of the Lord; as having been the only man with whom the Lord ever condescended to associate on terms of entire equality, as the only man unto whom the Lord ever “spake, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend;” as the only man to whom the Lord ever showed his “back parts.” As represented by the Bible, therefore, and its champions, crimes did not render men at all displeasing in the sight of the Lord. It seems that he could endure anything else better than he could the sight of physical blemishes of any kind. Upon these he could not look with the least degree of allowance.

When we consider these facts, and consider that all men naturally incline to hate whatever they believe God hates, and to love whatever they believe he loves, we can easily understand why it is that the believers in the Bible have always exhibited a far greater hatred toward every form of physical imperfection or deformity than they have exhibited toward any form of crime or of moral obliquity. We can easily understand why it was that David, who was pre-eminently a man after God's own heart, and who, as we elsewhere have seen, was guilty of the habitual commission of almost every form of infamous crime, so hated the sight of the blind, the lame, and the otherwise physically afflicted, that he sometimes offered premiums for their wanton destruction. "And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the lame, and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house" (2 Sam. v, 8). "So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up [to smite the lame and the blind], and was chief" (1 Chron. xi, 6). And God is represented as being well pleased with the conduct, on this occasion, of the worse than brutal monster, Joab, and with that of the equally brutal monster, David, who, for the unspeakably atrocious murder of these poor, helpless persons, rewarded the monster murderer, Joab, with the leadership of all the armies of God's peculiar people.

In the conduct of Joab and David, on this occasion, we perceive the inevitably brutalizing effect, upon the characters of men, of that monstrous Bible error, the law in question against physically afflicted persons. As to David himself, he seems to have been quite vain of his physical perfections. This we are led to infer, from the fact that, on the occasion of a wonderful religious revival, he stripped of his clothes and, in all his naked beauty, danced and shouted before the admiring gaze of his subjects. He seemed specially delighted to exhibit his name-

less charms to the view of the young women of the congregation. Michal, the most modest of all his many wives, saw him going through this little performance, and, in that tone of cutting sarcasm which only offended wives know how to use, and which, above all other things, is the dread of guilty husbands, said: "How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself" (2 Sam. vi, 20). The Lord, however, who seems to have been highly pleased with David's indecent exposure of his person on this occasion, and who had himself once indecently exposed his own "back parts" (Ex. xxxiii, 23), to Moses, punished Michal for her reproof of David, by inflicting upon her the then dreaded curse of perpetual barrenness" (2 Sam. vi, 13, 23).

If possible, however this monstrous law against afflicted persons was surpassed in atrocity by that against bastards to their tenth generations. Could these bastards help what was done by their ancestors ten generations back? If not, what could be more unreasonable, or more cruel, than to thus punish them for the deeds of those distant ancestors? Half the Hebrews of that time were either bastards, or the near descendants of bastards. Will the champions of the Bible have the blasphemous effrontery to charge God, to charge the infinite power that rules the universe, with being the author of this infamous law against innocent persons? If bastards were so hateful in God's sight as this law indicates that they were, why did he have his only son born a bastard, and why do you not now exclude these hateful objects from his congregations, even to their tenth generations? Are not bastards as hateful in his sight now as they ever were? If this infamous law were now rigidly enforced, how many of my opponents would be permitted to "enter into the congregation of the Lord?"

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine [that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh], receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed" (2 John i, 10). No matter how honest a man may be in his unbelief in the absurd doctrine in question, no matter how excellent he may be as a man, as a citizen, and as a neighbor, he must, according to the provisions of this commandment, which in all Christian countries is still in force, be denied all food, all shelter, all employment, all sympathy, all encouragement, all kind words, all means of living, all hope of happiness, all the inalienable rights of man; in short, all that renders a prolongation of life either possible or desirable. He must, if possible, be made to miserably perish, in the street, or in a dungeon, of hunger, of cold, of friendlessness, and of despair, or else be compelled to sacrifice his conscience and his manhood, to falsely pretend to believe that which he does not, and which he cannot, believe; in short, to become that most despicable of all mean creatures, a puling hypocrite.

Cruel and unjust treatment, such as, by this commandment, all Christians are required to inflict upon all the unbelievers in their absurd dogmas, never has converted, and never possibly can convert, any real unbeliever to a real believer in the dogmas of those from whom the cruel and unjust treatment has been, or may be, received. It has, however, succeeded, and will, doubtless, still succeed, for a time at least, in filling society, and especially the church, with whole armies of those slimy mockeries of manhood, religious hypocrites. This is one of those uncontradicted and fatally erroneous teachings of the Bible upon which is founded that terrible sectarian intolerance which has so constantly kept all Christendom shrouded in gloom and drenched in human blood. And the effect of this error, and of other similar errors, is still alive in the Church to-day. So far as she has the power, the Church still prescribes, crushes, and reduces to puling hypocrites, all who do not voluntarily accept her detest-

able dogmas. In this the light of the nineteenth century, in this the boasted land of civil and religious liberty, I myself have suffered many grievous persecutions from those whose humanity has been dwarfed or perverted by this, and by other similar teachings of the Bible. And is it not horrible blasphemy to charge God with the authorship of teachings so pernicious?

Similar to the above, in its monstrous spirit of intolerance, in its fearfully bloody consequences, is the following doctrine which is said to have originated with the so-called meek and lowly Jesus, with God himself, while on earth in the form of a man: "And he [Jesus] said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel [what gospel?] to every creature. He that believeth [believeth what?] and is baptized [baptized how?] shall be saved [saved from what?], but he that believeth not [believeth not what?] shall be damned" [damned to what?] (Mark xvi, 15, 16).

As to what it is that, according to this commandment, "every creature" is required to "believe," or as to what is meant by being "saved," or being "damned," I will not now stop to consider. Let these terms mean what they may, the conditions upon which, according to this passage, salvation and damnation are made respectively to depend, are very simple. No amount of wickedness, on the part of him "that believeth and is baptized," can possibly prevent him from being "saved;" and no amount of goodness on the part of him "that believeth not," can possibly prevent him from being "damned." The goodness or the badness of a man has nothing to do in the matter. Salvation is made to depend upon belief alone, and damnation upon unbelief alone.

From all this, it is clear that a man's salvation, or his damnation, depends entirely upon his power, or his want of power, to believe certain arbitrary and often extremely absurd dogmas. But whence comes the necessary power in question? Paul kindly answers this question as fol-

lows : “ For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that [the saving faith in question is] not of yourselves [no matter how hard you may try, you cannot manufacture or create it for yourselves] : it is the gift of God ” [alone] (Eph. ii, 8). If, then, God fails, as he usually does, to give us this faith, and then damns us, as my opponents declare that he always does, because of our want of it, our damnation is indisputably the direct result of his own horribly cruel neglect of duty. Just as reasonably might he damn us all, to whom he has never given wings, for our inability to fly, as to damn those of us, to whom he has never given faith, for our inability to believe. Let him give us wings, and we will gladly fly. Let him give us faith, and we will gladly believe, and be “ saved.” This uncontradicted and monstrous error of the Bible has, undeniably, helped fill the world with the most fearful persecutions, the most horrible slaughters. Those who accept this fatal error, as a divine truth, will never incline to treat kindly and justly anyone whose unbelief is supposed to render him an object of God’s eternal wrath. The believer in this error is bound to be a bigot, and, to the full extent of his power, a persecutor.

“ And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing [what had the Lord done to her, to hinder her from bearing?] : I pray thee, go in unto my maid ; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai [such a proposition from his wife would make almost any man hearken to her voice. Under such circumstances, would any of my opponents be deaf?]. And Sarai, Abram’s wife [what a love of a wife she was!], took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, . . . [how docile the maid seems to have been!], and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife [what did it take to constitute a wife?]. And he went into Hagar [of course he did. Would not any one of my opponents have done the same?], and she conceived ” (Gen. xvi, 2-4).

At best, this is a very immoral—indeed, a very indecent—story, fit to be read only by the inmates of bawdy houses. It is certainly not a proper kind of literature to place in the hands or children of heathens. With their only partially-developed intellects, their moral natures, often weak at best, are almost sure to be utterly corrupted by the reading of obscene stories like this. The Bible, which is filled with such stories, should, therefore, be carefully kept out of their hands. This disgusting story, however, becomes far more destructive to morality, when God himself is represented as its author; when he is represented as being so well pleased with the conduct of the infamous actors, in the scandalous affair which it narrates, that he proceeded at once to make them his special favorites and companions, to pour out upon them his richest blessings, and to hold them up, as models of wisdom and of excellence, for the admiration and imitation of all nations and of all ages.

As might have been expected, under the circumstances, Sarai's wonderful example of wifely generosity was faithfully followed by her two charming grand-daughters, Rachel and Leah. Stimulated by so illustrious an example, these two "mothers of Israel" vied with each other in the loving wifely duty of loaning their respective servant girls to their libidinous but godly joint husband, the famous old Jacob. And Abram's wonderful example of obedience to the wishes of his generous and thoughtful wife was faithfully followed, too, by his grandson, this same famous old Jacob, who, like a model husband, uncomplainingly hearkened to the voice of his two precious wives, Rachel and Leah, every time they wished him to go into the kitchen unto their two servant girls. What a happy family!

And the God that you so blindly and so devoutly worship is represented, by the Bible and its champions, as fully approving the shocking licentiousness of this famous family; as showering upon them his choicest blessings;

as making them his special favorites and companions; and as holding them up, as models of excellence, for the admiration and the imitation of all other families. Of necessity, this God, if, indeed, he be, as you teach that he is, an intelligent being, must have regarded the grossly licentious conduct of this old patriarch and his family as either right or wrong. If he regarded it as right, at that time, then, since there cannot be any change, either in his own nature or in that of the conduct in question, he is bound to regard similar conduct, in other families, as equally right, at the present time. And if he regards it as right, must it not actually be right? Can it be possible that, for forty centuries or more, he has been laboring under a fatal mistake in regard to the nature of such conduct? In order to approve your God's conduct, in regard to this case, are you not compelled to approve also the conduct of Jacob and his family, and the similar conduct of other families, both ancient and modern? Can you, without condemning God, condemn that which he approves? And can you, without encouraging the grossest immorality, approve the conduct in question? If you approve this conduct as being right, proper, and moral, what kind of conduct is it that you would condemn as wrong, improper, and immoral?

If, on the other hand, your God regarded the licentious conduct of Jacob and his family as wrong, then the fact that he, nevertheless, approved and encouraged that conduct is proof positive that he was a bad God, and that he led his worshipers into wicked ways. Besides this, since he never changes, he must still be a bad God, and must still be wont to lead his worshipers into wicked ways. In any view of the case, therefore, those who read this story, and who believe it to be of divine origin, are bound to be greatly degraded, in their moral natures, by that reading and that belief. We all know that the grossly licentious conduct of Jacob and his family was shockingly immoral. It makes no difference, therefore, whether your God ap-

proved and encouraged that immoral conduct, through ignorance, or through evil design. The undeniable fact that he did approve and encourage it at all is proof positive that his influence, and that of his Bible, are on the side of immorality. Such a God is certainly unfit to be either loved or worshiped by any except extremely immoral persons.

In the nineteenth chapter of Genesis, we have two shockingly immoral stories concerning the so-called righteous man, Lot, and his two daughters. The one of these stories, represents Lot as voluntarily offering to put out these two daughters, who were then virgins, to be outraged at pleasure, by a mob of sensual men, who were attempting to enter his house for the purpose of capturing two strangers who were stopping over night with him. Instead of risking his life, like a true man, in defense of his house, his guests, and the honor of his daughters, this despicable dastard offered to buy his own safety at the price of the honor, if not of the lives, of his two virgin daughters. He did not ask the consent of these daughters to be put out to the mob. He proposed to dispose of them just as he would have disposed of a couple of cows. And the God that you worship is represented as fully approving the vile conduct, on this occasion, of this inhuman father, and as holding him up as a model for the admiration and the imitation of the whole world. How fearfully demoralizing such examples, thus indorsed, are bound to be!

The other story represents Lot as committing the monstrous crime of incest upon these same two daughters. This story is so shockingly obscene that I cannot notice it in detail. Indeed, the language in which both of these extremely immoral stories are told is far too obscene to be literally quoted. And yet this horrible case of open incest, this shameless debauching of his own daughters by this monster sensualist, the so-called righteous Lot, this causing of them to become the mothers of his own offspring, is represented as being all right in the sight of

your God, and in that of the foul-mouthed vender of obscenity who insults the decency of the world by telling the story.

It is true that the writer does incidentally remark that, on each of the occasions on which he committed the atrocious crime in question, the monster, Lot, was so drunk that he did not know what he was doing. Whether Lot's worse than beastly [I beg every beast's pardon] drunkenness is mentioned as an excuse for his shocking conduct with those moral monstrosities, his own daughters, or not, I do not pretend to know. If it is, it is certainly a miserably poor excuse. Indeed, it is worse than no excuse at all. No crime is ever rendered any the less criminal by being committed in connection with another crime. The two crimes, committed together, are always worse than would be either one of them, if committed alone. Even if it were true, then, that Lot's crime of incest was committed at the same time with his crime of drunkenness, he would simply stand before us a more guilty man than he would if he had committed only the former crime. The pretended excuse, however, is evidently founded upon a falsehood. Lot certainly knew what he was doing. It is a well-established physiological fact that a man, when so drunk as to be unconscious of what he is doing, is totally incapable of performing the act upon which parentage depends. Many modern champions of the Bible, whose intelligence will not permit them to do otherwise, now admit this fact, and, in making this admission, compel themselves to admit also that Lot did know very well what he was doing, and that the Bible speaks incorrectly when it declares that he did not. In order, if possible, however, to excuse Lot, these champions set up the still weaker plea that he probably thought he was committing the illicit sexual act in question upon some woman of the neighborhood who had very obligingly come in to share his bed with him, and to furnish him the means of indulging to the full in sensual pleasures. These apologists,

however, forget the fact, set forth by the Bible, that there were no women in the neighborhood, and that Lot and his daughters believed themselves to be the only people then living upon the earth.

Be all these things as they may, however, will the champions of the Bible be so kind as to inform us what possible good to the world ever has been, or ever can be, derived from the reading of these, and of other similar shockingly obscene stories of the Bible? As histories, are they of any more use or interest to the world than would be similar accounts of similar scenes, enacted at the present time, in the most horribly degraded and criminal families, or the lowest dens of infamy? And as to morality, would it not be insulting the intelligence of even the champions of the Bible themselves to ask if they expect to render the people more moral by cramming them with this or with any other similar bawdy-house literature?

Suppose that there now should be published a book, containing as many obscene stories as are to be found in the Bible, and abounding in as much obscene language, but relating to similar bawdy-house scenes of the present time, would our good orthodox mothers, think you, be very solicitous to have that book placed in the hands of their own children, and sent to all the heathens of the world? Would they not, on the contrary, raise a great and a just cry for the immediate and utter suppression of that book? Why, then, do they labor so assiduously to place such a book in the hands of their own children and of the heathens at all? Is immorality any the less immoral, or obscenity any the less obscene, because it is old, and because the book in which it is found is called the Bible, than it would be if it were new, and were found in a book of some other name?

Suppose that, instead of being related in the Bible, of Jacob Israel and his family, who lived some four thousand years ago, the following story were related in a dime novel or some other such book, of Jacob Smith and his family,

of the present time, would the story, think you, constitute proper reading for your children? And would the book containing it be a proper one to keep upon your center table or in your library, or to send as a teacher of morality and virtue to the heathens? If not, how can you advocate such uses for such a story or for such a book at all? Is the effect of the story, on the minds and the moral natures of those who read it, at all modified by the age, the size, the shape, the quality of paper, the style of binding, the cost, or the name of the book in which it is found?

The story in question is found in Gen. xxx, 14-17, and is as follows: "And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes. And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldst thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel [who evidently meant business] said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to-night for thy son's mandrakes. [This fair offer, it seems, was promptly accepted.] And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me [Leah evidently meant business, too, of a different kind]: for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night. [What a love of a husband he was! so patient! so obedient!] And God hearkened unto Leah [yes, God was always sure to be present to see and to hear whenever any such things were going on], and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son. And Leah said, God hath given me my hire [I thought Jacob had given it to her. What had God to do in the matter except as a mere spectator?], because I have given my maiden to my husband." (What a strange reason! Jacob must have put that idea into the poor, weak woman's head, to encourage her to continue giving him the carnal use of her maiden. Jacob was no fool.)

What a happy family this was! It is no wonder that God rewarded Leah for the pious act of giving her maiden to her husband! Take notice of this fact, ye Bible-worshiping wives, and act accordingly! Since God never changes, he must still delight to see wives act thus generously toward their husbands, and must still be willing to reward such acts of generosity. Should you give your servant-girl to your husband, as Leah gave her's to her half of her husband, God would probably reward you as he rewarded her. Better try the experiment anyway.

It is no wonder that God selected this lovely family as a model for the imitation of all other families. It is no wonder that he selected it as the fountain from which all his peculiar people were to spring. There was, indeed, something very peculiar about this family—a peculiar looseness in regard to sexual matters. With this peculiarity, God seems to have been highly pleased, and to have done all he could to have it perpetuated among his peculiar people. To a great extent, indeed, it was this peculiar looseness among them, in regard to sexual matters, that rendered his chosen people a peculiar people. So far as we know their history, not an individual among them ever refused an opportunity to indulge in illicit sexual pleasures, except Joseph, on one single occasion, and his refusal, on that occasion, was doubtless due to the fact that he had just finished satisfying his sexual desires upon a servant-girl, or some other woman who was younger and more beautiful than old Mrs. Potiphar, to whom the refusal in question was given. I know of no other theory on which to account for Joseph's very singular behavior on that occasion. And since God never changes, he must still desire to see this same peculiar sexual looseness, among his worshipers of the present time, that he delighted to see among those of long-departed ages. Do my opponents never think of these things? And do they never indulge in this God-approved form of peculiarity?

If they do not, then some of the plainest teachings of the Bible are totally lost upon them.

Who can conceive a more beautiful picture than must have been presented by that chosen man of God, the pious, the patient, the obedient, the much-married old Jacob, as, for sexual purposes, he was being hired, for mandrakes and other such things, back and forth from one charming wife to the other, and from both charming wives to both charming servant-girls; while God, forsaking the rest of the universe, was devoting his entire time to the witnessing of these wonderfully interesting proceedings, and in so aiding the flagging virility of old Jacob, that this famous patriarch was enabled to keep all four of his women up to their full breeding capacity? Who can conceive a more beautiful picture of filial love and duty than must have been presented by Jacob's son, the incipient patriarch Reuben, when seeing his poor old father overburdened with matrimonial labors, he bravely and generously took a portion of those labors upon himself, when he "went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine: and Israel heard it?" [heard what]? How proud the good old father must have been of so promising a son—of such "a chip out of the old block!" What a delightful condition of society we should have, if, according to God's clearly-indicated wishes, all his worshipers would now follow the illustrious example of this model family! How delightful it would be for my opponents, the champions of the Bible, to be each thus hired back and forth among several wives and servant-girls, for candy, peanuts, chewing-gum, etc.! Why should it not be thus?

The champions of the Bible all admit that there is never any change either in God or in the moral nature of actions. Such conduct, therefore, as prevailed in Jacob's family, having once been all right in God's sight, is bound to be equally right in his sight now. The Mormons correctly take this view of the subject and act accordingly. They are the only true Bible-Christians now in existence,

and whoever opposes their polygamous institutions, opposes the Bible. With the Bible entirely on their side, they will be hard to put down, while the Bible itself stands. But what two intelligent champions of the Bible can look each other steadfastly in the face, and, without laughing, declare that they really believe that this monstrously immoral and shockingly blasphemous story was ever inspired by the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe, or that, in the form of a person, this power ever occupied its time in witnessing and in blessing the disgustingly indecent conduct of Jacob and his family?

As to the errors of obscenity to be found in the Bible, they can be counted by the hundreds; obscenities, too, of so gross a nature that any one of them, appearing in any other book, would condemn that book to exclusion from all respectable libraries, if not to suppression by law. From the very disgusting nature of these errors, however, I prefer to give them no further notice.

Another monstrous error of the Bible is its unequivocal advocacy of human slavery, which, in one form or another, has produced more sin and sorrow than have almost all other causes combined, and which, consequently, is itself a crime of so atrocious a nature that, as Dr. Adam Clarke remarks, perdition itself can hardly afford punishments adequate to the offense of those who are guilty of practicing it. The Bible approves even that most hideous form slavery, the slavery of one brother to another and the selling of children into slavery by their own parents. "If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. . . And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do. If she please not her master, . . . then shall he let her be redeemed" (Ex. xxi, 2, 7, 8). "And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve, as a bond servant. . . Both thy bond-men and thy bond-maids, which thou shalt have, shall be of

the heathen [all nations except the Jews] that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, they shall be your bond-men forever" (Lev. xxv, 39, 44, 46).

You will notice that all parts of this law are mandatory, and not merely permissive. It is not said that ye *may* buy bond-men and bond-maids, but that ye *shall* buy them. The fact that slavery, with all its untold concomitant evils, does not now curse every country in which the Bible is known, is due, not to the fact that any change for the better has taken place either in this ultra pro-slavery book, or in its ultra pro-slavery God, but to the fact that in regard to this matter, the people of nearly all civilized nations have risen above the teachings of this pernicious book, and of its monstrous God. Both God and the Bible are unchanged. They are just as ultra pro-slavery now as they ever were. God distinctly declared that, among his people, slavery should exist "forever." It is an undeniable fact, therefore, that all of us who fought for the overthrow of slavery in America, fought against the God of the Bible, and that we also overcame him.

Another very abominable error of the Bible consists in its teaching all of those for whom it was written to sell to strangers the flesh of animals that die of disease. "Ye [my opponents and all others for whom the Bible was written—all the true worshipers of the God of the Bible] shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien [anyone not of the same nationality as the seller]: for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. xiv, 21). From this, we perceive that all of those—be they Jews or gen-

tiles—who are holy unto the Lord their God, are not only permitted, but actually commanded, to dispose of the flesh of their fatally diseased animals to strangers or to aliens. Suppose, then, that, in obedience to this command, some Jew, or other person, who is holy unto the Lord his God, and to whom you are a stranger or an alien, should sell to you the flesh of an animal that had died of trichinæ, or some other communicable and deadly disease. Suppose, too, that, from the eating of this flesh, yourself and your family should be dying of a horrible and incurable disease, would you, or would you not, justify the cold-blooded monster who, for a few shillings, had thus deliberately murdered you, on the ground that, as a man holy unto the Lord his God, he had obeyed this horrible commandment? If you could not justify him in this case, how could you justify him in any other case? Are not the lives of other people as dear to them as yours is to you? And have they not as good a right to their lives as you have to yours? Besides this, can you, in any case, condemn the man who obeys this monstrous commandment, without, thereby, condemning the monstrous God who gave it? Dare you even intimate that this God is any better now than he was when he gave this commandment? If not, are you not bound to admit that you are worshiping a God who, if he could, would have you, and tens of thousands of other unsuspecting persons, murdered, in the most horrible manner, by means of foul and fatally diseased flesh furnished, for money, by those who are holy unto himself?

Another monstrous and undeniable error of the Bible consists in its holding all women as mere property, to be, like so many cattle, bought, sold, hired, loaned, or otherwise transferred, at pleasure, without their own consent, from one man to another. As a necessary result of this error, so utterly inconsistent with civilization, women, as you all know, are still held, throughout all Christendom,

as, in some unexplainable way, inferior to men, and as entitled to fewer rights and privileges.

I have already shown that the Bible permits a man to sell his own daughters as so much property. So it also permits a brother to sell his sisters, whenever, on the death of their father, they fall to him, together with their father's other property, as an inheritance. If the brother does not wish to sell his sisters permanently, or is unable to find a purchaser, he has a right to hire, or loan them, temporarily, to other men, for any purposes whatever. Thus Abraham, acting on this assumed-to-be divine principle, made all the money he could out of the beautiful Sarah, who was, at the same time, his sister, his wife, and his property, by hiring her out, on different occasions, to be the mistress or concubine of other men. His son Isaac also made a great deal of money, in this same way, by falsely pretending that his wife, Rebecca, was his sister, and by hiring her out, as such, to be the mistress of another man. And God is represented as fully approving the vile conduct, on these occasions, of these two holy men.

By the Jews, who were governed by the laws and the principles contained in the Bible, captured women were always included, as property, with captured cattle, and were disposed of in exactly the same way. As an example, see the case of the captured Midianitish women, cattle, and other property, as related in the thirty-first chapter of Numbers. After brutally butchering all the Midianitish men, who, not expecting such an attack from a professedly friendly nation, were totally unprepared for defense; after burning all their cities, towns, and villages, the band of robbers whom Moses, by God's command, had sent out to accomplish all this destruction, returned, driving before them vast numbers of captured women, children, and cattle. Moses went out to meet these returning robbers, and to dispose of this immense mass of live stock. He began by commanding: "Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath

known man by lying with him." How was the fact ascertained, in every case, whether a woman had, or had not, "known man by lying with him?" Was every woman's own word, in regard to that matter, taken as conclusive evidence, or were all of the women subjected, thus publicly, to a nameless and shockingly indecent surgical examination.

Having thus, in a decidedly business-like manner, disposed of a hundred thousand head or more of what he regarded as worthless live stock, Moses proceeded, in the same business-like manner, to dispose of another lot as follows: "But all the women children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves." Further on, we find an explicit account of the manner in which, by God's orders, Moses disposed of all the women and other live stock that remained after the killing just mentioned. Since this account contains much valuable information, I will give it in full.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of beast, thou and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation: and levy a tribute unto the Lord [what use had the Lord for any portion of this ill-gotten property?] of the men of war that went out to the battle; one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep. [Were there souls among the beeves, the asses, and the sheep, the same as among the women?] Take it of their half, and give it unto Eleazar the priest, for an heave-offering of the Lord. [Could any living thing be presented to the Lord as a heave-offering until after it had been butchered and prepared in a particular manner? If not, were the thirty-two virgins, who constituted a portion of this heave-offering, thus butchered and prepared, the same as were the beeves and other domestic animals that constituted the balance of this same heave-offering? Do we, or do we not, in this

case, have a horrible instance of human sacrifices, offered, by his own command, to the God of the Bible—to the God that you serve?] And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord. And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, did as the Lord commanded Moses. And the booty, being the rest of the prey, which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand, and seventy thousand, and five thousand sheep, and three-score and twelve thousand beeves, and three-score and one thousand asses, and thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man by lying with him. And the half, which was the portion of them that went out to war, was in number three hundred thousand, and seven and thirty thousand and five hundred sheep: and the Lord's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and three-score and fifteen. And the beeves were thirty and six thousand, of which the Lord's tribute was three-score and twelve. And the asses were thirty thousand and five hundred, of which the Lord's tribute was three-score and one. And the persons were sixteen thousand, of which the Lord's tribute was thirty and two persons. And Moses gave the tribute, which was the Lord's heave-offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the Lord commanded Moses."

And now, will the champions of the Bible please point out a single particular in which these thirty-two thousand young women were treated differently from the sheep, the beeves, and the asses, together with which they were captured? Were not all equally regarded and disposed of as live stock? And will these champions still insist that the infinite power that rules the universe—the power that they personify and worship under the name of God—ever did thus order the murder of a whole nation of inoffensive men, the burning of all their houses, the driving away of all their cattle, the cold-blooded butchery of all their cap-

tive married women and male infants, the dividing out of all their virgin daughters to be ravished at pleasure by their brutal captors, the offering of thirty-two of these virgins to itself as sacrifices, etc., etc.? If they do still insist that their God actually was guilty of having all these horrible deeds committed, will they have the face to pretend that they love such a God, and that they believe the world would be made better by becoming more like him?

The language of this story is so explicit that it cannot possibly be either misinterpreted or misunderstood. The champions of the Bible, therefore, unless compelled to notice it, uniformly avoid any mention of the story or of any event related therein. Indeed, of the whole catalogue of soul-sickening atrocities, of the description of which the story is made up, there is but one thing which these champions have ever attempted either to mitigate or to deny. That one thing is the sacrificing to God, as heave-offerings, of the thirty-two young women who fell to his lot as tribute. While admitting, as they all do, that God ordered these women to be thus sacrificed to himself, some of these champions assume that the order was never literally executed; that the women, the asses, and the other unclean animals were redeemed and not sacrificed. This assumption, however, is entirely unsupported by evidence. As an argument, therefore, it is utterly worthless. It is true that the first-borns of asses and other unclean beasts, all of which had to be offered to the Lord, might be redeemed, providing the party offering them saw fit to redeem them. If he did not see fit to redeem them, however, they had to be slain. No man was compelled to redeem anything, that fell to the Lord, except the first-borns of his own children. In regard, therefore, to the thirty-two young women in question, even if they could have been redeemed after being devoted or set aside, by divine command, as heave-offerings to God, there was no one under any obligation to redeem them : and, since all the men

were already bountifully supplied with women, it is not at all likely that anyone would have redeemed them. Even in this case, their sacrifice would have been almost certain.

But were not those young women all placed, by divine command, on the list of things "devoted"—of things consecrated or set aside for holy uses? And could anything thus devoted be redeemed? Certainly not. "Notwithstanding, no devoted thing that a man shall devote unto the Lord, of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord. None [whether beasts or human beings] devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death" (Lev. xxvii, 28, 29). This law, as you see, clearly permits and provides for the devoting to the Lord of human beings, and just as clearly declares that human beings, thus devoted, shall not be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death." If, then, the young women in question were not put to death, they were evidently saved in direct violation of this law—a law which Jephthah did not dare to violate, even to save the life of his own beloved daughter, whom he had, inadvertently, devoted unto the Lord.

Let the fate of the young women in question have been what it may, therefore, the case cannot possibly be rendered any better by assuming that they were not put to death. We know that the God of the Bible certainly did authorize the devoting of human beings to himself, as heave-offerings, and that he certainly did require that all persons, thus devoted, should "surely be put to death." We know, too, that on the occasion in question, he certainly did, in the most distinct language, order the thirty-two young women in question to be thus devoted to himself, to be put to certain death, according to this law. And can he be made to appear any the less odious by assuming that, on this occasion, the cold-blooded murderers whom

he had chosen for his peculiar people refused to execute, in all its soul-sickening details, his unutterably monstrous order? And would the blood-reeking cutthroats who, only a few moments before, had so cheerfully and so promptly obeyed his order to butcher, in cold blood, just to get rid of them, a hundred thousand or more women and infants, would such men, I ask, have been likely to disobey when he ordered them to slay only thirty-two more women for his own special gratification? And even if those young women were saved from death, were they not reserved for a fate a thousand times worse than death? Were they not reserved simply to sate the lust of the brutish priests who, as God's proxies or agents, were always wont to use all of God's property?

"And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and, if that had been too little, I would, moreover, have given unto thee such and such things" (2 Sam. xii, 8). This magnificent present of a whole household at one time of beautiful wives was made to David, who was already practicing polygamy and concubinage on quite an extensive scale. This present was made to him, by God himself—the God that you worship—in order that he might be able, on a grander scale, to enjoy the benefits of these two divine institutions. I do not quote this passage, however, either to show that the God of the Bible was a promoter of polygamy and concubinage, or that the whole mighty weight of the Bible's influence is in favor of those degrading forms of immorality. These facts, which few intelligent champions of the Bible pretend to deny, have already been fully established in former lectures. I make the quotation simply to show that the women in question were regarded as mere property, and were, as such, transferred to David, together with other property, without any regard to their own wishes.

In the eleventh and twelfth verses of this same chapter, we find a still worse case. "Thus saith the Lord, Behold,

I will raise up evil against thee, out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and [without their consent] give them unto thy neighbor, and [still without their consent] he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it [lay with Uriah's wife] secretly; but I will do this thing [cause some other man to lie with David's wives] before all Israel, and before the sun." The foulest fiend of hell would blush on the mere suspicion of being guilty of so abominable an act as that was which your God thus threatened to commit, and which, according to 2 Sam. xvi, 22, he actually did commit.

In this case, according to his almost invariable custom, your God let the guilty party escape, and inflicted the most fearful punishments upon innocent persons. Instead of punishing the guilty David, he waited eleven years, and then appeased his accumulated and unreasonable wrath by having this guilty man slay twenty thousand innocent persons, and by having his own agent or proxy, David's son Absalom, whom, for this very purpose, he had himself, by almighty power, lured into the paths of vice, take David's innocent wives, without their consent, to the flat top of a house, and there, in the most shameful manner, violate their persons, "before all Israel, and before the sun." These women, treated thus worse than brutes, were doubtless among the most accomplished and refined ladies of the nation. David, with all his own bad qualities, would hardly have chosen for his queens any but modest, accomplished, and refined ladies.

What, then, must have been the feelings of these ladies, these virtuous and modest wives and mothers, when they were thus dragged by their step-son to the top of a house, and there repeatedly ravished, before one another's faces, and in the sight of all the people? And what must they have thought of the God, by the direct interposition of whose power they were thus so foully outraged? Would this God act any worse than he then acted if he were now to have a number of our most virtuous, modest, and re-

finest Bible-loving wives and mothers treated in this same manner? And if he should have them thus treated, as he may, since he never changes, what would they think of him? Would they still sing his praises? If not, why do they sing his praises at all? And how can they hope to render men better by having them worship and imitate such a God? Is he any better now than he was in David's time?

Another grave error of the Bible is its teaching that God answers prayers; that, by whining and yelling to it, by telling it what to do and how to do it, men can cause the infinite power that rules the universe, and which is all the real God there is, to so change the nature and the direction of the various forces of which it is composed as to do what it would not otherwise have done, and to leave undone what it otherwise would have done. A belief in this erroneous doctrine has a very pernicious influence on the minds and the habits of men. In preventing them from depending upon their own exertions and adapting their lives to the laws of nature, it prevents them from seeking the source of all good; and, in leading them to trust in the aid of what they call God, in the aid of a mere personification or abstraction of all the natural forces, in the aid of that which never does and never can aid them, and, in leading them to spend their time and money in the so-called service of this mere abstraction or empty idea, this doctrine leads its believers into inevitable loss and bitter disappointment.

Besides this, the doctrine in question is a horribly blasphemous one. Indeed, from its very nature, every prayer offered to him is a blasphemous insult to God. It necessarily presupposes that he is a plastic being without any will or purpose of his own, a being that can be led hither and thither at pleasure by men, a being that is too ignorant to know his own duties until he is informed of them by men, and too negligent to attend to them until he is urged by men. Could anything be more blasphemous

than a doctrine which necessarily involves presuppositions so derogatory to the character of God? Remember this when next you presume, in what you call prayer, to give information and instructions to God.

Another grave error of the Bible, and the last that I shall notice, is its teaching that God forgives sins ; that, by offerings of roast meats, murdered young Gods, fulsome adulations, etc., the infinite power that rules the universe can be induced to let us off from all the legitimate consequences of any amount of wickedness, or can, at least, be induced to content itself with the horribly unjust punishment of some innocent person in our stead. By thus placing a premium upon sin, this shockingly blasphemous doctrine has been, and still is, one of the most fruitful of all sources of immorality and crime. Nearly all of those who die upon the gallows and who fill our prisons are firm believers in this monstrous doctrine. Since a large sin bill costs them no more than a small one, these persons have every inducement to run up as large sin bills as possible. In any case, they expect to entirely evade the payment of even a tithe of their own sin bills. They expect to do this by taking advantage of that moral bankrupt act called vicarious atonement. Not so with those who do not know any such things as vicarious atonement and forgiveness of sins. Expecting, as they do, to pay every farthing of their own sin bills themselves, these persons rarely run up those bills very high.

Thus much for a very few of the many errors of the Bible. And if there were no others, are not these fully sufficient to effectually condemn that book as a monstrous priestly imposition, and not the inspired word of an all-wise and perfect God?

LECTURE FOURTEENTH.

THE PROPHECIES OF THE BIBLE.

IN one lecture, which is all that I shall devote to the subject, I can, of course, notice only a very few of the many so-called prophecies of the Bible. These I notice for the purpose of showing that, in the sense in which the word prophecy is now usually understood, there are very few real prophecies in the Bible, and that, without a single well-defined exception, these few never have been, and, from their very nature, never can be fulfilled. I also propose to show that, even if they had been or should yet be fulfilled, their fulfilment would not have been, and would not yet be, of any possible benefit to the human race. In other words, I propose to show that, both in their promulgation and their fulfilment, the prophecies of the Bible have proved total failures.

As all Bible critics admit, the word prophet anciently signified simply a poet, a singer, a player on a musical instrument, a teacher, an interpreter; in short, a professor of some art or science, and not, as it is now usually understood to signify, a foreteller of future events. This was especially true among the Jews, who used the word in a generic sense nearly equivalent to that in which we use the word professor. There might have been, and probably were, in a few rare instances, prophets of mathematics, prophets of languages, prophets of astronomy, etc. Since the ancient Jews, however, were almost totally ignorant of all the sciences, and of nearly all the arts; and since they scorned to study the languages of the hated gentile nations around them, their prophetships were, naturally

enough, confined mostly, if not entirely, to the three departments of poetry, music, and law.

Many of the prophets of music were also prophets of poetry, composing for themselves many of the songs that they sung. Sometimes they extemporized songs, composing, singing, dancing, and playing on musical instruments, all at the same time. This style of poetical composition is still quite common in many eastern countries; and the disconnected pieces thus composed, when committed to writing, bear a striking resemblance to the so-called prophetic writings of the Bible. Indeed, these modern productions are just as much entitled to be regarded as prophecies as are the similar productions to be found in the Bible. Unless we know the very occasions for which they were severally composed, such compositions, whether ancient or modern, whether in the Bible or out of it, are usually almost unintelligible.

As the poets of the present day, and especially those of the class just described, may, and often do, express some opinion, some hope, or some fear, in regard to the future, and as this opinion, this hope, or this fear may prove to be correct, so it was with the poets or prophets of the Jews. They might, and often did, express some opinion, some hope, or some fear in regard to the future, and, occasionally, this opinion proved to be correct, this hope or this fear proved to be realized. In neither of these cases, however, have the compositions any claim to be regarded as the productions of seers or foretellers of future events. The meaning now almost universally applied to the word prophet, that of a foreteller of future events, is one of comparatively modern invention. The word prophet, therefore, with its present meaning, is no more applicable to the old poetic writers of the Bible, than is the word rascal, with its present meaning, to the apostles; the word villain, with its present meaning, to the renters of land; or the word knave, with its present meaning, to boys of every description.

When all of these facts are taken into consideration, the so-called prophetical writings of the Bible become simply so many jumbled masses of incongruous words and ideas, scarcely worth reading, and certainly not worth either quarreling or fighting about. Before noticing in detail any of these so-called prophecies, I wish to remark that, with the present meaning of the word, there is not a single passage in the Bible, even though it may have been spoken or written by a so-called prophet, which can be properly called a prophecy, unless it contains a prediction of some future event. And even in this case, the event predicted must be such a one as is, in its nature, contingent or doubtful, such as the overthrow of a particular city by an earthquake, the desolation of a particular country, at a particular time, by some new and unheard of plague, etc. The prediction of the occurrence of day and night, of winter and summer, of eclipses, of transits of Venus, of the return of certain comets, and of other events which, in their nature, are not contingent or doubtful, does not constitute prophecy. When, however, the event predicted is, in its nature, contingent or doubtful, then that prediction, whether made by a professed prophet or not, is a genuine prophecy. Of such prophecies thousands are made every day, many of which are as valuable as are any to be found in the Bible.

That there were pretended fortune-tellers or predictors of future events, among the Hebrews, just as there now are among ourselves, is undoubtedly true. These persons, however, were called seers and not prophets. They usually constituted a kind of vagrant or gypsy class, who preferred to live by their wit and not by their honest labor, and whose predictions were of no more value than are the similar predictions of the same class of persons of the present day. Of these seers, very few are mentioned in the Bible, and very few of their pretended predictions have reached our own times.

The first prophecy or prediction of a future and contingent event to be found in the Bible is as follows : “ But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it ; for *in the day* that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely *die* ” (Gen. ii, 17). Not as yet having any men whom he might inspire to communicate this prophetic threat to Adam, God was compelled, by the force of circumstances, to communicate it himself ; and this he did in language so plain that, by any one who had the slightest idea of death, it could not possibly be misunderstood.

Of necessity, God must have intended, by means of this prophecy, to accomplish some object. But what was that object ? Was it to prevent Adam from eating the fruit in question ? If it was, did not God utterly fail to accomplish that object ? And does he not here, at the very outset of his historical career, appear upon the stage as a very incompetent actor ? If this was not its object, will the champions of the Bible please inform us what that object was ? Was it to excite Adam’s curiosity and thus get him to eat the fruit ?

Let its object have been what it may, however, this prophecy was certainly never fulfilled. Adam did eat of the forbidden fruit, but he did not die on that very day, according to this prediction. He lived right on for nearly nine hundred and thirty years, and then died, as well he might, of pure old age. In this his first attempt, therefore, to foretell future events, God made a miserable failure ? And if he had not failed, if Adam actually had died on the very day in question, what possible good could have resulted from his premature death ? Would its utter extinction, thus in its very infancy, have been of any benefit to the human race ?

The next prophecy to be found in the Bible was, in like manner, communicated by God himself. This time it was communicated to the serpent, and was made entirely unconditional : “ Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and *dust* shalt thou *eat* all the days of thy life ” (Gen. iii, 14).

The former part of this double prophecy may have been fulfilled. The serpent does *go* upon his *belly* all the days of his life. Previous to the passing of this prophetic sentence upon him, he was probably accustomed to *crawl* upon his *back*, to *hop* along upon his *tail*, or to take his *tail* in his *mouth*, and then *roll* along like a *hoop*. I know of no other modes of locomotion which his conformation would have enabled him then to practice, except the one which he now practices, that of going upon his *belly*. This latter method, however, he evidently did not then practice, for, if he was already accustomed to go in this manner, it would have been the height of absurdity to pretend to inflict upon him, as a punishment, this mode of locomotion. As well might it have been said of man that he was punished by being compelled to go upon his feet, when he had never been accustomed to go in any other manner. In the case of the serpent, the punishment could have consisted only in his being deprived of some more desirable mode of locomotion, and being reduced to that of going upon his belly. But, with his conformation, what other method could ever have been more convenient, or more desirable? Wherein can there ever have been any change, or any punishment in this matter? Can the champions of the Bible inform us?

As to the latter part of this prophecy, it has certainly never been fulfilled. The serpent does not now, and never did, *eat dust*. And if, in order to fulfil this part of the prophecy, he should conclude to reduce his extensive bill of fare to dust alone, what possible good, either to himself or to the human race, could result from this change? As a prophet, does not God again stand before us a total failure?

The next prophecy of the Bible was also made by God himself; this time to Eve. "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception" (Gen. iii, 16). Since, as yet, Eve knew nothing about either sorrow or conception, how could she understand what God meant? Was there, in

Paradise, any sorrow at all previous to the passing of this sentence upon Eve? If not, what was there of this element to multiply? Can multiplication be performed without a multiplicand? And if the multiplicand be nought, is not the product bound to be nought also? In order to have these things multiplied upon her, must not Eve have already had both sorrow and conception? Be this as it may, however, since we do not know how much of either sorrow or conception would have fallen to Eve's lot, had these words never been spoken, we cannot, of course, know whether this prophecy has ever been fulfilled or not. If it has been, what good has resulted from that fulfilment? Has the human race been, in any way, benefited by an increase of sorrow? And as to an increase of conception, have not nine-tenths or more of all that have been conceived been damned? And is there any good in damnation? Most of these remarks and questions are also equally applicable to the prophecy made to Adam, immediately afterwards, in regard to thorns, thistles, labor, etc.? What good has resulted from any of these things?

In Gen. xii, 15, 16, we have this remarkable prophetic promise made to Abraham: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed *forever*. And I will make thy seed as the *dust* of the *earth*: so that if a man can *number* the *dust* of the *earth*, then [and of course not otherwise] shall thy seed also be *numbered*." These prophetic promises were never fulfilled. Abraham and his seed did not possess that land "forever." Indeed, for more than two thousand years, they have not possessed any land at all. Besides this, they have never been, in number, "as the *dust* of the *earth*." They have never been a very numerous people. Any schoolboy could always number them.

In Gen. xv, 18, the extent of the land, thus prophetically promised, is described: "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the *river* of *Egypt* [the Nile,] unto the great river the river *Euphrates*." As here described, the land

promised was never given at all. The Hebrews never possessed any land near "the river of Egypt," and very little, if any, near the Euphrates. And if these prophetic promises had been fulfilled, how much better off would the world have been?

In several other places, we find similar prophetic promises, made either to individual Hebrews or to the whole Hebrew nation. None of these promises, however, were ever fulfilled; and since they were all unwise, partial, and unjust, it is better for the world that they never were fulfilled. These promises, being unequivocal predictions of future and fortuitous events, constitute genuine prophecies—about the only ones, too, to be found in the whole Bible. Since, therefore, these have all failed, what can we expect of those that are conveyed to us in language so obscure that, after more than twenty-five hundred years spent in disputing about these things and in cutting one another's throats, the doctors of divinity are as far as ever from agreeing in regard to their meaning?

A thousand different events have been fixed upon, by as many different champions of the Bible, as being each the fulfilment of the same prophecy. And, in many instances, any one of these events does answer as well as does any other the purpose of a fulfilment. These cases are similar to that over which three good old women are said to have fought in Pennsylvania. Having observed a certain phenomenon which they all held to indicate that there would be a death within a week, they were all on the *qui vive* for news of the expected death. From what she regarded as good authority, one of them learned that within the week, a man had died in New Orleans, and she, at once, set this down as the fulfilment of the sign. Another, in the same way, learned that the sign had been fulfilled by the shuffling off of the mortal coil of a woman in New York. The third found the same satisfactory result in the untimely decease of a child in Saint Louis. The result was three separate fulfilments of the same

sign, and a fearful tripartite fight among the good women when next they met. Had there been more women in the party there would, undoubtedly, have been more fulfilments of the sign, and the interest of the inevitably resulting fight would have been greatly augmented. So it is with many of the so-called prophecies of the Bible. Their extreme vagueness makes it very easy to claim that they have been fulfilled. When, however, we ask to have pointed out to us the fulfilment of a certain prophecy, we at once have placed before us as many fulfilments as there are different champions of the Bible. In order to sustain their absurd and pernicious religion, the Christians have fixed upon many of these vague prophecies, so-called, as referring to Jesus. Some of these I will now notice.

“Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, [virgins never bring forth daughters], and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted [from what language, and into what language?] is God with us” (Matt. i, 22, 23). Not one of the New Testament writers ever quotes correctly any of the pretended prophecies of the Old Testament. Generally, however, we can manage to find the passages which they pretend to quote. In this case, we find that Matthew pretends to quote Is. vii, 14, which says: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

There are few things that more clearly show the unscrupulousness of the Christian priesthood than does the effrontery with which they claim that this passage refers to Jesus. When we come to examine the circumstances under which the language of the passage was used, we see clearly that it has no more reference to Jesus than it has to yourself or to Balaam's ass. The language is so clearly inapplicable to Jesus that it never could have been applied to him except by intentional fraud.

At the time this language was used, Ahaz, king of Judah, was greatly troubled because of the approach of the united forces of his enemies, the king of Israel and the king of Syria. Isaiah, therefore, pretending to be the Lord's mouthpiece, as Balaam's ass had been on a former occasion, undertook to encourage Ahaz by declaring that the two kings, whose approach so troubled him, should not prevail against him; and that, in a short time, their own kingdoms should be rendered desolate by the ravages of the king of Assyria. In order to make Ahaz believe these rather incredible declarations, Isaiah assured him that God would confirm them by a certain sign. Isaiah then proceeded to describe the sign as follows: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings" (Is. vii, 14-16.)

The emergency that rendered a sign necessary being immediate, the sign itself, to be of any value, had to be immediate also. So far from being able to wait seven hundred and fifty years, as our priests would have us believe that he was to wait, for Mary's son to be a sign of the things predicted, Ahaz had to have a sign before the close of the war in which, at that very time, he was engaged. Without any delay, therefore, Isaiah proceeded to prepare the sign in question, which he himself had proposed. The Lord does not appear to have had anything to do in the matter. Isaiah thus describes his own manner of preparing this sign: "And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah, the priest, and Zechariah, the son of Jeberechiah. And I went unto the prophetess [his own wife, not Mary]; and she conceived [of her husband, not of a ghost], and bare a son. Then said the Lord to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. [Not Jesus.] For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My

father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria, shall be taken away before the king of Assyria" (Is. viii, 2-4). Jesus did not cry, My father and my mother, at all. He did not know his father, and did not acknowledge his mother.

Having thus himself selected his own child to be a sign on this occasion, as he had doubtless himself selected his own other children, to be signs on former occasions, Isaiah boasts : "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me [What had the Lord to do with them? Did not Mrs. Isaiah give them?] are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion." [*Did he dwell there?*] (Is. viii, 18.)

From all this we learn that the famous virgin in question, who was to "be with child" and to "bear a son," was no other than Mrs. Isaiah, the prophet's own wife, who was already the mother of several children. We also learn that, like a sensible woman and a good wife, she conceived of her *own husband*, and not, as our priests would have us believe that a certain Miss Mary — did seven hundred and fifty years afterwards, of a *rakish old bachelor ghost*. In order that the world might be sure that no *ghost* had anything to do in this matter, Isaiah, as we have already seen, with commendable prudence, had two faithful witnesses present to see and to record that he himself begat the child in question. Had the rakish old bachelor ghost, who is said to have begotten Jesus, used similar precaution, and had had two faithful witnesses present to see and to record that he himself actually did beget Jesus, and that no *man* had anything to do in the matter, the world would be far more certain than they now are that Jesus was, indeed, the son of the said rakish old ghost.

From this we see clearly that the only child to which, without gross perversion, the language in question can possibly be made to refer, was begotten and born just as are all other children—begotten and born, too, seven hundred and fifty years before the birth of Jesus. Besides this, the

child's name was not Jesus. It was Maher-shalal-hash-baz. As to the fact of the child's mother being a *virgin*, that amounts to nothing at all. Every Bible critic knows that, in ancient times, and especially among the Jews, the word *virgin* was not restricted, as it now usually is, to women who had not been sexually embraced by men, but was applied, indiscriminately, to all *young* and *virtuous women*, and even to *men of this class*, whether they were *married* or *single*, and whether they had, or had not, experienced the sexual embrace. It was only *criminal* or *improper sexual intercourse* that destroyed one's *virginity*. The pure and proper sexual intercourse of the married state never did this. The loss of virginity, especially among the young, was always attended with the loss of purity and of innocence. A true wife—a good mother, was just as much a virgin as was any woman who had never sexually known man. Hence, although Isaiah's wife had certainly known her husband, and was already the mother of several children, yet being a *pure* and *innocent* woman—being a true wife and still *young*, she was still a *virgin*, and was very properly spoken of *as such*. Indeed, it seems to me that her claim to virginity was far better than could have been that of Miss Mary — or any other woman who ever voluntarily became a mother without having first been a wife. In this, the original and only true sense of the term, every man who is born of a pure and innocent mother—of one who has ever been true to all the sacred obligations of matrimony, has a better right to claim that he is born of a virgin than had Jesus, who was begotten of an unmarried father, and born of an unmarried mother.

The case remains the same, too, even though, in their desperate attempt to shield his mother's name from infamy, the followers of Jesus have set up the absurd claim that he was begotten by a *ghost*, or at least by the shadow of a ghost, and not by a *man*. Admitting the truth of this absurd claim would not render the case any better for the woman. The holding of sexual intercourse—and without

such intercourse no child can possibly be begotten—with a ghost, sufficiently substantial to get her with child, would just as surely and just as thoroughly sully an unmarried woman's purity, and destroy her virginity, as would the holding of similar intercourse with a living man. Indeed, I regard the ghost case as by far the worse one of the two. I profess to know a good deal about the nature of women, and I do not hesitate to say that any unmarried woman who, for the purpose of being made pregnant, or for any other purpose, would yield her body to the sexual embraces of a ghost, would, for the same purpose, just as promptly yield it to the similar embraces of a living man. Indeed, I do not hesitate to say, too, that any unmarried woman would much sooner suffer herself to be sexually embraced by a man than by a ghost, if she were deeply in love with the man. I do not hesitate to say, further, that the woman who, following the strong impulses of her nature, yields her body before marriage to the sexual embraces, so natural, of the man whom she dearly loves, and whose wife she hopes yet to be, is more entitled to be regarded as still a virgin than would be the woman who would deliberately yield her body to the similar embraces, so unnatural, of a ghost, for whom she could entertain no feelings of love, and whose wife she could never hope, or even desire, to be. And the placing, by the priests, of the adjective holy before the name of either the man or the ghost does not, in the least, change the nature of the case. The nature and the propriety of the sexual act remain precisely the same.

Be all this as it may, however, we now see clearly that this pretended prophecy of Jesus amounts to nothing more than the fact that, in order to encourage his king, Isaiah staked whatever reputation he may have had as a fortune-teller upon the result of the war in which, at that very time, the king was engaged. If, in this case, his fortune-telling should prove to be correct, then, before a child, which he himself proposed to immediately beget, could be

born, and become able to say, "My father, and my mother," that is, within three years at most, Ahaz would see his two terrible enemies utterly overthrown.

Unfortunately, however, for Ahaz and his people, as well as for Isaiah's reputation as a fortune-teller, the sign utterly failed to signify the thing predicted. So far from being driven out of their own kingdoms, as Isaiah predicted that they would be, those two kings beat Ahaz in a great battle, killed immense numbers of his soldiers, and carried away as captives still more immense numbers of women and children. These facts we learn from 2 Chron. xxviii, 1, 5, 6, 8: "Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, but he did not do that which was right in the sight of the Lord, like David his father. Wherefore the Lord his God delivered him into the hands of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter. For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men. And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria."

The hundred and twenty thousand that Pekah slew in one day and the two hundred thousand that he carried away, three hundred and twenty thousand in all, added to those that he may have killed on other days, and to the "great multitude" that were either killed or carried away by the king of Syria, doubtless made a grand total of over half a million of persons who were either killed or carried away as captives. This was truly a terrible punishment to inflict upon a very small nation of innocent people simply because their king "did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord." It was the custom, how-

ever, of the God of the Bible, to thus punish the innocent for the offenses of the guilty.

And this was the very war in which Ahaz was engaged at the time the so-called prophecy in question was spoken, the very war whose termination the old fortune-teller, Isaiah, pretended to predict, using as a sign thereof his own son, "Maher-shalal-hash-baz," who was born of his own wife, "the prophetess," whom he very properly called a "virgin." We see, therefore, very clearly, that, so far from having any reference to Mary and her son, and to events seven hundred and fifty years in the future, the language in question had reference only to Mrs. Isaiah and her son, and to events which, at the furthest, were to occur within a very few months. We also see that Isaiah did not tell the fortune of Ahaz correctly; that everything turned out exactly contrary to his predictions. And thus crumbles to dust the main prophetic prop of that monstrous system of priestly imposition called the Christian Religion.

Under the circumstances with which he was surrounded, Ahaz could not have been otherwise than filled with intense anxiety, and overburdened with unavoidable cares. Messengers were constantly arriving with the most appalling intelligence. The two hostile kings were advancing, each one of them with forces far superior to his own; and defeat at their hands involved, as he well knew, almost certain death or slavery to both himself and his people. All around him were uproar and confusion, and he, to whom all others looked for safety, was himself beginning to tremble under the fearful and well-founded panic that had seized upon his people. As Isaiah himself very forcibly expresses it, the king's "heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind." To encourage him, therefore, under these peculiarly trying circumstances, Isaiah, who, with all his disgusting egotism, seems to have been a man of remarkable coolness and courage, staked his reputation as a

fortune-teller upon the peculiarly unfortunate prediction which I have just described.

The decidedly novel, serio-comic nature of that which he proposed as a sign that the war would terminate fortunately for Ahaz, clearly exhibits the peculiar coolness and hopefulness of Isaiah's character. When all others were despairing of saving their own lives and those of their families, when every other man looked upon a prospective increase of children as a great misfortune to be carefully avoided, he substantially informed his terrified king that, for his own part, so far from yielding to despair, he proposed to go straight home to his wife and beget himself another child, in full confidence that God would so interpose in behalf of the people, of whom himself and his wife formed a part, that a child, as yet unbegotten, would live, not only to be born, but to be able to "cry my father and my mother," in full confidence, too, that, before it could cry these words, the two hostile kings in question would be utterly overthrown by their great enemy, the king of Assyria.

This is substantially the story as related by Isaiah himself, and, when thus related, it is both natural and reasonable. When related, however, as our priests relate it, what could be more unnatural or more unreasonable? They would have us believe that, amid the general terror and confusion of the occasion, when the king was overburdened with business and anxiety, Isaiah, like an old idiot, instead of either aiding or encouraging him, began to prate to him about a young woman who, seven hundred and fifty years afterwards, was to be debauched by a ghost, and, as the result of this debauchery, was to bear a bastard baby. They would have us believe, too, that Isaiah proposed this monstrously absurd and indecent seven-hundred-and-fifty-year ghost baby affair as a *sign* by which Ahaz was to know what was to be the result of the *war* in which, at *that very time*, he was *engaged*. While preaching this supremely ridiculous stuff, can two

intelligent priests look each other in the face without laughing?

Admitting that Isaiah was sufficiently superstitious to believe that any such ghost affair was ever to occur, are we to understand that he was so far gone in idiocy as to approach the king, at this the most inopportune time possible, and go to prating to him on such a subject? Would the king, at such a time, have listened, for a moment, to such nonsense? Troubled as he was about the desperate affairs of his kingdom, would he have cared a fig who was to have a bastard baby so many centuries after his own time, or who was to be the baby's putative father? Would he not have punished Isaiah for insulting him, at such a time, with trifling so silly; or at least have told him to go to thunder—the Jews had no hell for such occasions—with his seven-hundred-and-fifty-year-old rake of a ghost and its bastard brats? How would it fare now with an old fool who, amid the inevitably intense excitement preceding a great battle, should approach the commander-in-chief of one of the opposing armies, and go to prating to him so abominable a batch of balderdash?

Besides all these things, we learn, by reference to the story as told by Isaiah, that Ahaz was requested to ask of the Lord any sign he pleased in regard to the result of the war in which he was then engaged. We learn also that he refused to ask any sign at all, on the ground that to ask such a sign would be tempting the Lord. We learn further that it was only after the king's refusal to ask a sign that Isaiah proceeded to propose and to prepare the sign which is described in the language that I have quoted. When the privilege of asking a sign was granted to Ahaz, there were many chances to one that he would avail himself of that privilege and ask a sign. Had he done this, there is not one chance in many millions that he would have asked the sign that was finally given. And was the coming of Jesus, or the proofs of his identity and his divinity, left to one chance in many millions? If some other

sign, or if no sign at all, had been chosen on this occasion, would this particular sign ever have been prepared, would this particular child, whether he was Jesus or Maher-shalal-hash-baz, ever have been born at all?

After describing various circumstances, connected with the crucifixion of Jesus, John, xix, 36, says: "For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken." Here we are gravely informed that the language concerning the *bone* had been used, prophetically, by some of the writers of the Bible, with reference to *Jesus*—that it was his bones that were not to be broken; and that it was for the special purpose of fulfilling this prophecy, and of thereby condemning themselves, that the Jews refrained from breaking his bones, which, otherwise, they certainly would have broken.

As originally used, however, the language in question has no more reference to Jesus and his bones than it has to you and your bones, or to Balaam's ass and its bones. The language which John pretends to quote, but which, in fact, he grossly misquotes, is found in Ex. xii, 46, and, together with its context, reads as follows: "In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house: neither shall ye break a bone thereof." This language, you perceive, is mandatory and not prophetic. It was spoken by Moses concerning the *ram* which, within a few days, every family of the Hebrews were to kill, to dress, to roast, and to eat, at what was called the feast of the Passover. As to *Jesus*, who did not live until some fifteen hundred years afterwards, and whom the Hebrews were never required, on the fourteenth day of the first month of every year, to kill, to dress, to roast, and to eat, "with unleavened bread and bitter herbs," Moses does not seem to have even dreamed that any such person was ever to exist. By changing the gender of the pronoun, and both the mood and the tense of the verb, as well as the form of all the words but three, John has entirely changed both the construction and the mean-

ing of the whole passage, and thus rendered his pretended quotation a monstrous imposition—an infamous forgery.

No sane man will attempt to deny that *all portions* of the command in question refer to the *same thing*. If then, *any portion* of that command refers to *Jesus*, *all the other portions* must refer to *him* also. By simply using the word *Jesus*, therefore, in the place of the word *lamb*, we have the whole command—the whole prophecy, if you wish to regard it as such, expressed according to the interpretation of it by John, and by the Christian priesthood generally. “Your *Jesus* shall be without blemish, a male [neither a female lamb nor a female Jesus would have answered the purpose intended] of the first year; [neither a lamb nor a Jesus more than a year old would have answered the purpose intended]; ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats [Did Jesus ever run with the sheep or the goats?]; and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. [Was Jesus kept up so long before he was killed?] And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door post of the houses [Did they ever do this with the blood of Jesus?] wherein they shall eat it. [Did they ever eat Jesus?] And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire [did they ever roast Jesus?] and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. A foreigner and a hired servant shall not eat thereof. [Were all hired servants, and all who were foreigners to the Jews, ever thus excluded from all participation in the benefits which Jesus was designed to confer upon the world?] In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.” And now, after thus carefully examining the scripture in question, are you prepared to swear that the bone mentioned therein was a bone of Jesus? And are you prepared to be eternally

roasted in fire and brimstone if you cannot so swear—so believe?

Here are six verses, containing, in all, one hundred and forty-three words. In order to make the entire command, or so-called prophecy, apply to Jesus, as we certainly must if we make any portion of it apply to him, I have made but one change in all these words. John, however, does not wish to make any portion of this language apply to Jesus, except the last clause of the last verse; and in order to make this clause, which contains only seven words, apply to Jesus, he makes eight changes: five in words, one in gender, one in mood, and one in tense. By these wholesale changes, he undertakes to transform a plain *command* into a mystical *prophecy*, and the son of a common scrub *ram* into the son of an almighty *God*. Can any man be honest who knowingly helps carry out this monstrous imposition? Permit me to make eight changes for every seven words, and I can make a prophecy, concerning myself, of any passage in the whole Bible—a much plainer prophecy too, than John has succeeded in making, concerning Jesus, of the passage which, as we have seen, he has so shamefully mutilated and distorted for the express *purpose* of making it apply to *Jesus*.

In order to have had his pretended prophecy satisfactorily fulfilled, John, who was certainly never much troubled by conscientious scruples, should have had Jesus run with a flock of sheep or of goats until he was a year old. He should then have had him taken from the flock, on the tenth day of the first month, and kept up till the fourteenth day of the same month, and then killed, dressed, roasted, and eaten, “with unleavened bread and bitter herbs,” in a house, and all this without carrying “forth aught of his flesh abroad out of the house,” and without having “a bone of him broken.” It is true that, in order to have done all of this, John would have had to have as many young Jesuses born every year as there were separate families in all Israel. With his wonderful skill

however, in mutilating and distorting language, he should have been able to easily overcome this trifling difficulty. He should, at least, have tried to do so. He could not possibly have made the case any worse than he has made it.

The writers of the New Testament do not seem to have been at all particular in regard to the passages that they fixed upon, in the Old Testament, as prophecies of Jesus. Whenever they wanted to weave such a prophecy into their absurd fabrications, they seem to have opened the Bible at random, taken the first passage that met their eye, and then shaped it to suit their purpose. They seem to have been as careless in regard to passages of scripture as a certain traveler is said to have been in regard to the bones of a saint. Having been commissioned by a pious old aunt, whose heir he expected to be, to bring home to her from the Holy Land the bones of a saint, he proceeded to execute his commission by gathering up the first bones he found after entering that country. These happened to be the remains of a deceased ass, which, during its lifetime, had never been noted for anything of a saintly nature. The enterprising traveler, however, when duly informed of these facts, said they did not make the slightest difference; that by whittling the bones down a little, and then labeling them "The bones of a saint," he could make them answer his credulous old aunt's purpose just as well as would the bones of a real saint, which, by the way, might be very hard to find. So it seems to have been with the writers of the New Testament. Not having been able to find in the Old Testament any real prophecies of Jesus, they seem to have gathered up, promiscuously, a number of passages relating to rams, to asses, etc., and, after whittling them down a little, to have piously labeled them "Prophecies of Jesus." And, with the ignorant and the credulous, for whom alone the New Testament seems to have been written, these ram-and-ass counterfeit prophecies seem to have answered all the purposes of real proph-

ecies, just as the asinine remains of a counterfeit saint answered all the purposes of the remains of a real saint.

Speaking of Joseph, Matt. ii, 14, 15, says: "When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, *Out of Egypt have I called my Son.*" The language which Matthew here falsely pretends to quote is found in Hos. xi, 1, and is as follows: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called [him] my son out of Egypt." The "son," therefore, that was called out of Egypt, was "Israel," the whole Hebrew nation, and not Jesus. This fact is made still more clear by Ex. iv, 22, 23, which says: "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born. And I say unto thee, Let my son go that he may serve me."

Speaking, as he does, of an event long since past, Hosea very properly uses the past or historical tense. Matthew, however, by quoting him in the perfect tense, attempts to mislead us in regard to the time at which the Lord called his son out of Egypt. By beginning the word son with a small letter, Hosea, shows clearly that he does not mean to apply this term to any form of the Deity. Matthew, however, by beginning the word with a capital, in his pretended quotation, attempts to mislead us into the belief that Hosea does mean to apply the term to some form of the Deity. And now, what are we to think of the honesty of Matthew, and, indeed, of all the other writers of the New Testament, who, for the express purpose of *misleading* the people into the belief of a false, absurd, and pernicious doctrine, thus habitually *mutilate, distort*, and thus give utterly *false renderings* of, all the language that they profess to quote? And what are we to think of the honesty of our priests and other champions of the Bible who, after having frequently had clearly pointed out to them the undeniable dishonesty of these

writers, still continue to make it their trade to sustain the monstrous impositions which these unscrupulous writers have originated?

From what I have now said, it is evident that, if the language in question has any reference at all to Jesus, he must have been the whole Hebrew nation. Certain champions of the Bible, however, have set up the absurd claim that, in the loins of an ancestor of that generation, Jesus was actually called out of Egypt, on the occasion referred to by Hosea, together with the balance of the Hebrew nation; and that, consequently, the language in question does apply to him. If Jesus was a mere man, this claim may be well founded. In this case, however, by becoming equally applicable to every other Hebrew, this pretended prophecy ceases to be of any special benefit at all to Jesus. If, on the other hand, Jesus was a God, or the son of a God, then he could never have been in the loins of a human ancestor, and, consequently, could not possibly have been called out of Egypt in the way just indicated.

Besides this, if, in the time of Moses, God called his son out of Egypt, the language in question, being used long after that event, cannot possibly have anything prophetic about it. It is bound to be purely historical, and, hence, does not admit of any such thing as a fulfilment. Besides this, if, a dozen or more centuries before his birth, Jesus had already been called out of Egypt, why did he, after his birth, have to be taken down into Egypt, in order that, by being called out thence, he might fulfil this same scripture? In order to fulfil this utterly useless scripture, did God have to call his son out of Egypt on two different occasions many centuries apart? In thus attempting to palm off upon the world, as a prophecy of Jesus, this purely historical statement concerning the Hebrews, Matthew is again guilty of a monstrous imposition. Thus falls another of the principal prophetic props of priestcraft.

“And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, *He shall be called a Nazarene*” (Matt. ii, 23). By using the word prophet in the plural number, Matthew evidently means to convey the idea that several of the prophets, referring to Jesus, had declared that “he shall be called a Nazarene.” The truth of the matter, however, is that no such language is found at all in the Old Testament. In all the other cases, in which he pretends to make quotations from the Old Testament, Matthew so shamefully mutilates and distorts the language which he pretends to quote that it entirely loses the meaning given it by its author. In this case, however, he goes further and resorts to the manufacture of a downright falsehood—to the commission of one of the basest of forgeries.

Admitting, however, that the language in question had been “spoken by the prophets,” to what would it have amounted? Everyone that lived in Nazareth was “called a Nazarene.” The language, therefore, being equally applicable to thousands of other men, would have been of no special service at all to Jesus. Anyone, in fact, even though he had not been born in Nazareth, could have satisfied the only demand of this pretended prophecy—that of being “called a Nazarene”—by simply going to reside for a time at that city. In thus going to reside at Nazareth, and thus bringing it about that himself was “called a Nazarene,” Joseph satisfied the only demand of this supposititious prophecy in his own person just as well as he did in that of the infant Jesus, whom, for the express purpose of fulfilling this pretended prophecy, he is said to have taken with him to that city.

It seems, indeed, that Joseph had selected, in the Bible, several passages which he could torture into seeming prophecies concerning some person, and that he had then set to work to bring about, in the person of Jesus, the apparent fulfilment of these fictitious prophecies. We have already seen that, for the express purpose of fulfill-

ing one of these pretended prophecies, he took Jesus into Egypt and then brought him out again; and that, for the express purpose of fulfilling another one of them, he took Jesus to reside at Nazareth. But were these trivial events, thus purposely brought about, of so vast importance that the infinite power that rules the universe would have had them solemnly predicted many centuries before they were to occur? The very thought is blasphemy. Suppose that some other child had been carried down-into Egypt, as he easily might have been, and then out again, and that he had been then taken, as he also easily might have been, to reside at Nazareth, and that he had been "called a Nazarene;" suppose that all these things had occurred to this other child before they occurred to Jesus, would not the other child have been the one pointed out by the prophecies? And if the one thus pointed out was to be the Son of God—the Savior of the world—would not the other child, and not Jesus, have been the Son of God—this Savior of the world? Or suppose that, instead of all this, as might easily have happened, no child at all had been carried into Egypt and out again and then to Nazareth, what would have become of these pretended prophecies, and who would have been the Son of God?

In order to bring about the apparent fulfilment of the pretended prophecy concerning a virgin's being with child, Joseph had simply to proceed himself to put the pretended virgin in the required condition, and then, by means of a simple dream—which, of course, he himself had to dream, and which, equally of course, he had to dream with his eyes wide open—to establish the fictitious fact that she was still a virgin. And could not any other man of ordinary virility and cunning have accomplished all of these things? You know very well that he could. Suppose, then, that some other man had accomplished them, with reference to some other child, before Joseph accomplished them, with reference to Jesus, to which set of actors would the pretended prophecy have referred, and

who would have been the Son of God? That Joseph was, indeed, himself the father of Jesus is rendered more probable by the ease with which he was convinced that the child was of the Holy Ghost, and that Mary was still worthy to be his wife. Had he not been fully satisfied that the child was his own, a simple dream, even if it had been a real one, would hardly have convinced him of these things.

Whether this part of the grand farce in question was deliberately enacted for the express purpose of meeting the requirements of the fictitious prophecy, which had already been prepared, or whether the fictitious prophecy was deliberately prepared for the express purpose of meeting the requirements of this part of the grand farce, which had already been enacted, we have no certain means of knowing. Be this as it may, however, there is no room for reasonable doubt that the one was deliberately prepared, or enacted, for the express purpose of meeting the requirements of the other. It seems far more likely, however, that the fabrication of the fictitious prophecy was entirely an after-thought—a stratagem resorted to by Joseph and Mary, or by their friends, as a means of escape from a serious difficulty into which these two persons, like too many other imprudent lovers, had already unfortunately fallen. Indeed, the violence which, as we have already seen, was done to the scripture in question, in order to distort it into an apparent prophecy of Jesus, shows clearly that the one who thus distorted it was rendered utterly reckless by something that drove him to desperation.

Having thus prepared and then fulfilled this pretended prophecy, or, rather, having first fulfilled it and then prepared it, Joseph would have found no difficulty either in the preparing or the fulfilling of those other fictitious prophecies concerning the calling of some one out of Egypt, and the calling of him a Nazarene. If Joseph really did perform the acts attributed to him by Matthew, then he certainly performed them, as Matthew says he did,

for the express purpose of fulfilling these fictitious prophecies. If he did not perform them, then it is clear that the unscrupulous Matthew himself manufactured both the pretended prophecies and their pretended fulfilments. The champions of the Bible, therefore, may choose whichever horn they will of this dilemma.

As I have already said, there is no such language in the Old Testament as that which Matthew pretends to quote concerning some one's being "called a Nazarene." The language to which he evidently refers, and upon which, like a low punster, he plays, is found in Jud. xiii, 5, and reads as follows: "For lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son [the birth of a daughter is never predicted], and no razor shall come on his head; for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb." This language was spoken, not to Mary, concerning her son Jesus, but, nearly twelve hundred years before her time, to the wife of Manoah, concerning her son Samson. This passage, too, declares that the child in question shall actually "*be a Nazarite* unto God from the *womb*," and not, as the villainous mutilator Matthew has it, that he shall merely "*be called a Nazarene*," from the time that he became an inhabitant of Nazareth. Could a man, under any circumstances, have been a "Nazarene" unto God?

Although the words Nazarene and Nazarite are somewhat similar in form, their similarity is entirely accidental, just as is that of the words bismuth and Bismarck, or of the words whiskey and whisker. Their similarity of form arises from no similarity of meaning. In their signification, they are no more similar than are the words Londoner and Freemason. Indeed, the word Nazarene does bear to the word Nazarite exactly the same relation that the word Londoner bears to the word Freemason. As a Londoner is simply an inhabitant of London, so a Nazarene was simply an inhabitant of Nazareth. With a Nazarite, however, the case was quite different. As does a Freemason now, so did a Nazarite then, take his appellation from his

connection with a certain fraternity; or from his being bound by certain oaths or vows to observe certain regulations, and to perform certain duties not required of other men.

In regard to his mode of living, a Nazarene was under no more restrictions than were the inhabitants of any other Jewish cities. A Nazarite, however, on the contrary, was bound to let his hair grow without cutting, and to abstain from the use of all luxuries, such as wine, vinegar, and grapes. Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist are all the Nazarites that I find mentioned in the Bible. Being an inhabitant of Nazareth, Jesus was, very properly, called a Nazarene. He was not a Nazarene "from the womb," however, and hence, even if the words Nazarene and Nazarite were synonymous, Jesus would not have met the requirements of the pretended prophecy in question. So far from being a Nazarite, Jesus indulged in the use of wine and other luxuries to such an extent that, when they beheld him approach, the people were wont to exclaim, "Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber."

Besides this, as there could have been no such thing as a Londoner before there was any such city or place as London, so there could have been no such thing as a Nazarene before there was any such city or place as Nazareth. It is evident, therefore, that, since, at the time the language in question was used, there was no such city or place as Nazareth, the language could not have had any reference to any such city or place, or to any of its inhabitants. In other words, the language could not have been used with reference to Jesus, an inhabitant of Nazareth.

On all hands, it is admitted that the pun—the mere play upon words that are somewhat similar in form, but entirely dissimilar in sense—is the lowest of all kinds of wit. It is generally disgusting even when used by a professed humorist in regard to trivial matters. It becomes utterly unbearable when used by a professed historian in regard to serious matters. And, when used in regard to a

sacred matter by one who professes to speak under inspiration of God, it becomes shockingly blasphemous. In resorting to this mere play upon words, therefore, Matthew, who, by the champions of the Bible, is claimed to be an inspired writer, stands before us, not only in the unenviable character of a punster—a low wit or wag—but also in that of a shocking blasphemer. In no possible view of the case can his conduct be defended, or his pretended prophecy be made a real one.

In John xii, 14, 15, we read: “And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon [how much more like a naughty schoolboy he acted than like the infinite power that rules the universe]; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold thy king cometh sitting upon an ass’s colt.” Admitting that the passage which John here pretends to quote really is a prophecy, and that it was fulfilled by Jesus on the occasion in question, of what value to the world has either the prophecy or its fulfilment ever been? Had the same feat of ass-manship been performed by a common schoolboy, would it not have been equally beneficial to the world? Could not anyone capable of riding an ass have fulfilled this pretended prophecy just as well as Jesus fulfilled it?

Dealing in twos, as he almost invariably does, Matthew gives quite a different account of this affair. He also gives quite a different quotation of the scripture of which this ass-riding exploit is claimed to have been a fulfilment. Instead of having Jesus himself thus find one ass and mount it himself, Matt. xxi, 1–7, has him send two of his disciples to steal two asses, has his disciples place him upon these two asses, and has him ride them both at once into Jerusalem. Did Jesus, by this ridiculous performance, ignorantly fulfill the pretended prophecy in question, or did he know of the pretended prophecy, and accomplish this performance for the express purpose of seeming to fulfill it? If he did it ignorantly, could he have been a God? If he did it knowingly, was there anything wonder-

ful in his performance? Could not any clown, who might have known of the pretended prophecy, have seemed to fulfil it as well as Jesus did? Was Jesus the only man in Judea that could ride two asses at once?

What a figure Jesus must have cut, riding thus upon two asses at once into Jerusalem, and followed by a yelling mob of admiring vagrants! Picture to yourselves the President of the United States riding thus into Washington, the Prince of Wales riding thus into London, or the Emperor of Germany riding thus into Berlin! Is not the very thought of such a jackassical performance by one of these grand personages too ridiculous to be fully expressed? Is it not blasphemy, then, of the most shocking kind, to charge the Almighty himself with having accomplished this supremely ridiculous performance—with having accomplished it, too, simply because it was supposed that somebody, many centuries before, had predicted that some one would be fool enough to perform this worse than nonsensical feat? In such a case, would not the ass-riding God have been himself the greatest ass of all?

When, for a moment, you have seriously considered these things, are you sure that, because of your belief in them, you are any more fit for heaven, or any more likely to attain it, than are those whose intelligence and whose reverence for God are so great that they are unable to believe any such things? For my own part, I cannot believe so meanly of the Almighty—whoever or whatever he may be—as to even suspect that he ever thus assumed the form of a man and the character of a clown, and engaged in a performance so unspeakably ridiculous. And am I to be eternally damned for my inability to think meanly of God in this case? Is not God the infinite power that rules the universe? If so, who was ruling the universe while this infinite power was thus amusing itself, and its vagrant companions, riding those two asses?

You may claim that it was not the Almighty himself—not the entirety of the infinite power that rules the

universe that performed the supremely ridiculous jack-assical feat just described. You may claim that this feat was performed by the son, the nephew, or some other near family relative of the infinite power in question. But what proof have you that this power ever had any son, any nephew, or any other near family relative? And if you have any such proof, then will you please explain how this relative, or these relatives, came to have the human form when the great power itself had no form at all? And what kind of family government must this person have had, if it permitted its son, or any other member of its family, to go strolling about the country thus, with a band of rowdies and vagrants, catching up without leave and riding other people's asses, and doing other things of a disorderly nature? You might just as well charge these unbecoming acts to God himself—to the infinite power that rules the universe—as to attack the family government of that power by charging them to any member of its family. For my own part, I have too much confidence in the dignity and self-respect of the Almighty—of the infinitely great and glorious power in question—to believe that it ever permitted any of its sons, its nephews, or other young relatives—any of its young Almightyes—any of its young infinite powers, to thus play both the thief and the clown by stealing asses and riding them two at a time. Admitting, however, that God did inspire some one to advertise, by what is called a prophecy, that he, or his son, or some other member of his family, would come along after a while, playing the clown in a two-ass circus, and, admitting, too, that the circus did actually come along as advertised, is the world any better off either for the advertisement or for the coming of the circus? Who dare say that it is?

The scripture to which Matthew and John both refer, and which they both shamefully misquote, is found in Zech. ix, 9, and reads as follows: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold,

thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Who it was that came to Jerusalem as a king riding thus "upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass," I do not pretend to know. He was evidently some one, however, that the people recognized as their king—some one that was just returning from captivity in Babylon—some one that all Jerusalem rejoiced to welcome home. In none of these respects did Jesus answer the description of the person to whom this language refers. Besides this, according to the accepted chronology of the Bible, the events here described occurred some sixty-seven years before they were thus recorded by Zechariah. It is evident, therefore, that, since it was written concerning past events, the language in question is bound to be historical, and cannot possibly have anything prophetic about it. It does not matter, then, to whom, or to what, this language refers. Since it does not refer to anybody or to anything in the future, it certainly cannot refer to Jesus, who was still many centuries in the future, or to any of the events of his time.

I have now fully and fairly examined five of the most important of the so-called prophecies of Jesus, and have clearly proved that not one of them refers, even in the slightest degree, to him, or to anything of the time in which he lived. I have clearly proved that they all refer to matters which were either past or present at the time they were written; to matters, too, which were of no interest whatever to anybody but the Jews themselves. I have also clearly proved that, even if these passages had been prophetic, they are of such a nature that almost anyone who may have been born of a pretended virgin, and who may have seen fit to make a visit to Egypt, to go to live at Nazareth, to ride two asses at once into Jerusalem, etc, could have fulfilled them as well as did Jesus, and could thus have had the same proof that he was the Son of God that Jesus now has. I have clearly proved, further,

that, whether fulfilled or unfulfilled, none of these so-called prophecies are of a nature to be of any value to anyone except the priests. Were it necessary, I could also easily prove all these same things in regard to all the other pretended prophecies of Jesus. Not one of them can bear the test of fair investigation. I will now briefly notice a few of the many prophecies of the New Testament, and then close this already long lecture.

In the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, Jesus is made to predict two very important events, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the coming of Christ to judgment. Each of these grand events is described as being made up of many minor events; and each, pertaining as it does to the future, constitutes a genuine prophecy. That is, the writer, whoever he was, represents Jesus as making a genuine, but rather unsuccessful attempt to guess what events are to occur in the future.

I have said that both of the events in question pertained to the future. This is true so far as concerns Jesus, who is supposed to have uttered the predictions in question concerning them. The book of Matthew, however, was not written till after the destruction of Jerusalem. The writer of that book, then, of whose name and whose character for honesty we know nothing, knew, at the time he wrote these prophecies, just what were the real circumstances attending the destruction of Jerusalem. It was but natural, therefore, that, writing as he did for the express purpose of sustaining the claims of Jesus to be a divine personage, he would put into the mouth of his hero just such words as he knew would have constituted a correct prophecy of those events had they been actually spoken before the events occurred. To have put false prophecies concerning these now well-known events into the mouth of Jesus, or even to have left such prophecies uncorrected had Jesus actually spoken them, would have been to expose Jesus as an impostor, and to thus defeat the very purpose for which the author of Matthew wrote.

We would naturally expect, therefore, that this pretended prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem would be found to correspond very nearly with the circumstances of that event as they actually did occur. And such we find to be indeed the case. It is clear, however, that this apparent fulfilment of this *ex post facto* production, this undeniably counterfeit prophecy, amounts to nothing at all. I could now write what, had it been spoken previous to the event, would have been a correct prophecy concerning the late civil war in America, and, by putting these my own words into the mouth of some one who lived long ago, I could have made just as remarkable a prophecy concerning this war, and one just as literally fulfilled, as is that which the author of Matthew has put into the mouth of Jesus concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. I could make such an *ex post facto* prophecy succeed, too, among the people, as well as he made his succeed, if I could have mine sustained, as his has always been, by the sword, the dungeon, the rack, and the stake. Thus much for about the only prophecy in the Bible that seems ever to have been fulfilled.

After giving what he pretends to be a prophetic description of the destruction of Jerusalem, the author of Matthew, still putting his own words into the mouth of Jesus, says : “Immediately after the tribulation of these days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens [the solid sky or firmament which was formerly supposed to rest, like an inverted bowl, over the earth, and into which the heavenly bodies were all set to keep them from falling] shall be shaken : And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one

end of heaven, to the other. . . . Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. xxiv, 29-34).

You will notice that all the things here predicted were to occur "immediately after the tribulation" which was to accompany the destruction of Jerusalem, and while some of the generation to which Jesus belonged were still living. But none of these events did occur then or at any later period; and, from their very nature, most of them never can, and, consequently, never will, occur at all. Why, then, you may ask, did not the author of Matthew make the prophecy concerning these things correct in the mouth of Jesus as he made that concerning the destruction of Jerusalem? The reason is very obvious: As we have already seen, the author knew the events, already past, which were connected with the destruction of Jerusalem. In regard to these events, therefore, he had nothing to do but to throw back into the mouth of Jesus such a description of them as would correspond with the events themselves as he knew that they had actually occurred. In regard to the events connected with the coming of the Son of man to judgment, on the contrary, the author knew nothing about them. In regard to these events, therefore, he had to construct, and put into the mouth of Jesus, a prediction composed of a popular superstition of his own time, embellished somewhat with material drawn from his own imagination. Since the things predicted were never to occur at all, the only way to have corrected the prediction concerning them would have been to omit it entirely, and this our author would doubtless have done, had he known, as we now know, that none of these things would ever occur. From the best authority we have on the subject, however, he wrote soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, and while all these events were still confidently expected soon to occur.

From all this, it is evident that, while the author was able to put into the mouth of Jesus a correct prediction

concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, which had already occurred, he was not able to do the same concerning the darkening of the sun, the falling of the stars, etc., which had not yet occurred, and which we now know never were to occur. In regard to these latter events, he did the best he possibly could do. He put into the mouth of Jesus, his own opinions, and the prevailing opinions or superstitions of his own time. If he had known anything of the science of astronomy, he would hardly have made Jesus predict the falling of the stars, the shaking of the heavens, etc., which were certainly never to occur at all. And now, since this latter prediction is certainly a false one, I leave the champions of the Bible to say whether it was manufactured by Matthew, and dishonestly put by him into the mouth of Jesus, or whether Jesus did actually make it himself, and thus prove himself to be an ignoramus and an impostor. Take whichever horn they may of this dilemma, the cause of these champions is lost.

Mark, who wrote about the same time with Matthew, committed the same error of having Jesus place the day of judgment immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem. We account for his error in the same way that we account for that of Matthew. Neither one of them knew what he was writing about. Luke, who wrote several years later, seeing that these things did not occur "immediately after the tribulation of those days" in which occurred the destruction of Jerusalem, and not having any idea as to when they would occur, but still believing that they would yet occur at some time in the future, has Jesus predict them, but has him leave the time of their occurrence indefinite. John, who wrote many years later still, having doubtless come to the conclusion that no such events were ever to occur at all, very wisely permits Jesus to say nothing at all about them. So much for the most important of all the so-called prophecies of the New Testament.

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Seeing then that these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?” (2 Pet. iii, 7–12).

From the fact that Peter exhorted the people of his own time to be on the lookout for the day of judgment, and to be prepared for its coming, it is evident that he, like most of the other Christians of his time, believed that this day was near at hand. Indeed, his language simply conveys, in other and more explicit words, the same prophecy which, as put by Matthew, Mark, and Luke into the mouth of Jesus, we have just been considering. In fact, nearly all the prophecies of the New Testament have some reference to the day of judgment—the end of the world, or rather of the universe—which, as I have just stated, was then commonly supposed to be near at hand.

In this prophecy, as here set forth by Peter, we find several errors in science, which mark the prophecy as the mere guess-work of an ignorant and uninspired man; which make it absolutely certain, too, that the prophecy will never be fulfilled. In the first place, Peter declares that “the heavens shall pass away with a great *noise*.” It is now a well-established fact of science that *noise* or *sound* essentially consists in *vibrations*, of certain degrees of rapidity, in the atmosphere; and that, consequently, no sound can pass through a vacuum or space unoccupied by atmosphere. In order, then, by their abrupt departure, to produce “a great *noise*,” Peter’s

“*heavens*” would have to be within the atmosphere that surrounds our earth—within ten miles of the earth’s surface, there not being sufficient atmosphere beyond that distance to transmit “a great *noise*” of any kind. Besides this, in order to produce the vibrations necessary to sound in our atmosphere, those heavens would, of necessity, have to be of a *material* or *substantial nature*, such as they [the heavens or firmament] were supposed to be by the writers of the Bible. But are there any such material heavens within so short a distance from the earth’s surface? If not, then it is certain that this prophecy can never be fulfilled.

In the second place, Peter errs in teaching that *all* the bodies of the universe are to be dissolved at the *same time*. It is now a well established fact of science that, as it would be utterly impossible for all the water of the earth to exist, at any one time, in the form of vapor, in its chaotic condition, in our atmosphere, so it would be equally impossible for *all* the matter of the universe to exist, at any one time, in a vapory, chaotic, or “dissolved” condition; that, at all times, space is very nearly saturated with matter in that condition, and that, consequently, as fast as more matter, from the dissolution of old worlds, enters into that condition, space, becoming over-saturated with matter in that form, is bound to condense a portion of it into new worlds. It is evident, therefore, that at all times throughout the entire universe, formation and dissolution, action and reaction, must ever continue to be, as they ever have been, exactly equal to each other; and that this prophecy which, at a certain time, requires all dissolution and no formation, all action and no reaction, can never possibly be fulfilled.

In the third place, Peter errs in teaching that the dissolution of the earth, and of all the other bodies of the universe, is to be *instantaneous*. This error is the counterpart of that other error of the Bible by which the formation of the earth, and of all the other bodies of the universe, is made to be instantaneous; to be the immediate

effect of the speaking of certain magical words by the Almighty Elohim. It is now a well established fact of science that both the dissolution of old worlds and the formation of new ones are going on as fast as they can go, all the time ; and that the dissolving of an old world, or the forming of a new one, is a process that requires for its completion countless millions of ages. It is evident, therefore, that this prophecy, which requires the process of the dissolution of all the bodies of the universe to be instantaneous, can never be fulfilled.

Finally, Peter errs in teaching that all the bodies of the universe are to be "*burned up or dissolved . . . with fervent heat.*" The very reverse of this is true. It is now a well established fact of science that all worlds have their *birth or formation* in the *igneous condition*, in "*fervent heat;*" that all *burning* worlds are *new* worlds, still in 'process of *formation*. It is also an equally well established fact of science, though one not so generally known, that all worlds *die*, or have their *dissolution*, in the opposite extreme of *inconceivable cold* ; that all *cold* worlds are *old* worlds already in process of *dissolution*. It is evident, therefore, that this prophecy, which requires the reversal of the conditions upon which depend the formation and the dissolution of worlds, can never possibly be fulfilled. In a future course of lectures, entitled "*The Universe Analyzed,*" I will fully demonstrate all these facts of science. For the present these remarks must suffice.

"And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together" (Rev. vi, 13, 14). This is simply a repetition of the prophecy which we have been considering concerning the destruction of the universe. Here, however, in imagination, picturing to himself the fearfully sublime scene of that expected destruction, the author, in really beautiful language, describes it as passing before his eyes. But here, too, as before, we find the prophecy

founded in ignorance, and involving errors which render its fulfilment utterly impossible. It requires all the *stars* to be *small* objects, stuck like nails into the under side of a solid framework or firmament which was supposed to rest like an inverted bowl over the earth. It also requires all these little stars to be capable of being shaken out of this their supporting frame-work, and made to come rattling down, like so many figs, upon the *earth*. Finally, it requires the heaven itself, or sky, to be a solid substance like plate metal of some kind, something capable of remaining and standing alone, after all the stars have been shaken out of it; something capable of being then rolled together as a scroll and taken away. Since it is utterly impossible for these absolutely necessary conditions ever to exist, it is evidently utterly impossible for the prophecy ever to be fulfilled. And so of all the other prophecies or fortune-tellings of the New Testament. They are all founded in error, and hence can none of them ever be fulfilled.

I have now fully and fairly analyzed and exposed many of the most important prophecies, or pretended prophecies, of the whole Bible. I have shown that very few of them are real prophecies at all; that of those which are real prophecies, very few ever have been or ever can be fulfilled; that the very few which seem to have been fulfilled, were written after the occurrence of the events claimed to be their fulfilment, and that, whether fulfilled or unfulfilled, none of these prophecies ever have been, or ever can be, of any service to the world. And thus fall all the prophetic props of priestcraft. Not one of them can bear the test of fair examination.

LECTURE FIFTEENTH.

THE DEVIL OR SATAN OF THE BIBLE.

A BELIEF in the real existence of a personal devil was almost universal. Now, however, that belief is confined almost exclusively to the ignorant. By the intelligent, it is generally rejected. Almost the entire Christian priesthood, however, notwithstanding their own utter unbelief in the existence of any such being, still persist in using his sooty, split-footed, spear-tailed, sulphuric majesty, the devil, as a convenient bug-aboo with which to scare the ignorant masses, upon whom they principally depend for their support, and thus make them better priest-paying instruments. When I see the extent to which this extremely dishonest practice is carried, and the fearfully pernicious effect which it has upon the people, I feel that I would not have performed my full duty, as a defender of truth and humanity, were I to leave this strong prop of priestcraft still standing—were I not to expose the utterly mythical nature of this purely priest-invented being, the devil.

The idea of a personal devil seems to be entirely of gentile origin. In the Jewish system of theology, there seems never to have been any such personage. This was certainly true till after the Babylonish captivity, during which the Jews adopted many of the religious ideas, institutions, and myths of their gentile masters. Even at the present time, few Jews claim the devil as an element in their system of religion.

So far as I now know, however, all gentile nations have had their bad gods or devils, and these, by keeping up a constant warfare against the good gods, have always prevented these latter personages from accomplishing much good to the human race. The success of these enterprising devils has been truly wonderful. Except, occasionally, when outwitted by their inventors, the priests, they seem never to have failed in any of their undertakings. Unaided by an army of priests, no god seems ever to have been able to cope with one of these energetic gentlemen of the split-hoof and the spear-shaped tail.

Most pagan nations have made their devils or bad gods self-existent. In this way, they have entirely relieved their good gods of all responsibility for either the objectionable existence or the wicked actions of the devils. The Christians, however, by absurdly making their devil a mere creature, made, supported and controlled by their Jehovah or so-called good God, leave this latter personage just as much responsible for all evil as he would have been had no devil ever been invented at all. The doctrine of devils is an essentially polytheistic doctrine, and never can be made to harmonize with the strictly monotheistic religion of the Jews.

Having in a former lecture already fully explained how the idea of devils, as well as that of all other gods, originated, I will, in this lecture, omit any notice of that matter, and, at once, proceed to show that the devils are all absurd pagan myths of no possible advantage to anybody but the priests. I will also show that the Bible gives its principal devil, Beelzebub, a much better moral character than it gives your adopted God, who, of old, was simply the tutelary divinity of the Hebrew nation alone.

As to when the devil or Satan of the Bible was made, I shall not now stop to inquire. Neither will I stop to inquire of what kind of material he was made, or how long it took to make him. Suffice it to say that he was made by *God*, who still sustains him, and who, consequently, is,

indirectly, responsible for all the evil ever produced by the devil.

It is true that some of the champions of the Bible teach that, when he first emerged from God's workshop, the devil was a good and respectable being, fit to dwell in heaven and to be accepted as a member of heaven's highest circle of society. For the truth of this teaching, however, there is not a particle of proof. Besides this, the teaching is, in itself, extremely absurd. If the devil was ever thus a good and perfect being, and if there was never any other devil or source of evil to render him otherwise, he must, of necessity, have always remained thus good and perfect. How, then, did he manage to become so evil and so imperfect as the champions of the Bible would have us believe that he now is? Were not all the elements that enter into his composition derived directly from God himself? If not, from what other source were they derived? Besides this, would a good and perfect being have answered any of the purposes for which a devil was needed? Could he ever have stood as the author of all evil? And was there any one but God himself who had power to change a being thus good and perfect into one utterly evil and imperfect? And if God did himself make this change, was he not himself undeniably the original source of all evil? Might not the champions of the Bible, therefore, just as well have God make the devil evil at once, and be done with it, or even have him perform all evil himself without any devil at all, as to have him make the devil good at first and then change him to evil?

Having made the great arch-devil, Satan or Beelzebub and many legions of subordinate devils, God found it necessary, so our priests inform us, to prepare for them a suitable place of abode. At any rate, according to the testimony of these priests, such a place was prepared, and a *hell-of-a-place* it was. As to where it was located, however, we have never been informed. Of course, our priests all know exactly where it is. This knowledge, however,

they carefully conceal from all others. Their reason for so wonderful a reticence, on so important a subject, is very obvious. It is only the fear of hell that makes men willing to pay for the services of priests. Remove that fear and the trade of the priests would be forever gone. They would nevermore be able to live, as now they live, upon the unrequited labor of others. And all these things they very well know. They know, too, that, if the people were to find out exactly where hell is and what it is, they would be able, without the aid of priests, to avoid it, and hence would cease to fear it and to squander their money upon priests. You perceive, therefore, that the priests are acting wisely, for their own interests, in thus keeping the location of hell entirely concealed from the eyes of the vulgar.

Although, for the excellent reasons just explained, our priests will not give us a particle of information in regard to *where* hell is, they will, with an eye to an increase of converts and of filthy lucre, give us any amount of information in regard to *what* it is. They inform us that the only articles used, for any purposes whatever, by the inhabitants of that country, are "fire and brimstone," and that, consequently, these articles are in very great demand. Why the hellites use so much brimstone, we are not informed. They probably use it thus profusely, however, to improve their complexions and to prevent itch and other cutaneous diseases which, in so hot a climate and among so dirty a set of fellows as they are represented to be, would be likely to prevail. We are also left in ignorance as to whence the hellites obtained so much brimstone, and as to what they give in exchange for it.

Be all these things as they may, however, our priests also inform us that hell is a "bottomless pit." Admitting this to be a fact, we would like to know what there is to keep the hellites and their brimstone from tumbling right through, and pouring out, on the under side, where the bottom ought to have been. Our priests, doubtless, have

an excellent reason for withholding from us, as they do, this much desired information. Be this as it may, the fact that they do, for some reason, withhold it, has led me to seek this information from other and equally reliable sources. This information I have obtained, and can assure you that there is nothing at all to prevent the occurrence of the catastrophe in question; that the hellites do tumble right through, just as might be expected, and that no one ever remains in hell for any considerable length of time.

A portion of this information I derive from a poem, entitled "The Devil's Defense; or, A Fair Hearing on the Other Side." This poem professes to be given in the language of the devil himself, and hence, in regard to the devil and his kingdom, and all his affairs, it ought to be regarded as first-class authority. It certainly is as good authority as is any ever given in regard to any of these things by the champions of the Bible. If these champions have any better authority, will they please give it?

In the poem just mentioned, the devil informs us that, at the first, hell was prepared for himself and his subordinates alone; that the confining of men therein was entirely an after-thought; that, almost immediately after their incarceration therein, he and his legions made their escape from that sulphurous region; that they did this, as we might have expected they would, by dropping through; that it was then, and not till then, that, in order not to lose all that the place had cost him, God resolved to use hell as a place in which to incarcerate the souls of ungodly human beings. Thus far, the teachings of the devil certainly appear very plausible. This sulphuric poet then goes on and says:

"But, lest rebellious men might be,
Like devils, fond of liberty,
And lest, at last, they might get out,
And, joining us, put him to rout,
He left them nothing, when they fell,

On which to stop, inside of hell.
He seemed to think that, 'neath his frown,
They'd keep right on, forever, down;
He did not know that, like a tide,
They'd all pour out on t'other side;
Yet this occurred, soon as he tried it,
Though lying priests have oft denied it."

The devil then goes on and informs us that, in order to induce himself and his legions to return to hell and to remain there, or, at least, to make their headquarters there, he was made king of the whole region. He also informs us that, as an additional inducement, God promised him at least nine-tenths of the human race, and agreed to forward them as fast as accommodations could be provided for them in hell. Of this arrangement, so advantageous and so honorable to himself, and of his remarkably successful reign, he says:

"Established thus upon a throne
Of red-hot brimstone, all my own,
I turned my thoughts to regulate
And make secure my new estate.
All this I did with great success,
As e'en my enemies confess;
Indeed, no enterprise in hell,
Since then, has failed to prosper well.
More loyal subjects could not be,
Than all the devils are to me;
And men—nine-tenths of all, or more—
Walk freely in at my front door.
A few, ashamed of what they've been,
Like curs, of course, come sneaking in;
But these do not annoy me much,
As only slaves attend to such.
These are the priests who do not dare
To face their flocks assembled there,
And who appear with poorest grace

Of all mankind in such a place.
These men, with virtue ably shammed,
Oft stoutly swear that they're not damred;
And try to frame some pretext fair—
Some good excuse for being there.
They oft invent some wondrous tale,

And yet their efforts all do fail;
For all my subjects know full well
That none but damned men come to hell.
These priests do also oft declare
That they cannot endure our air,
Which is, of course, as well you know,
With burning sulphur all aglow.
While still on earth, then, 'twould be well
For priests to fit themselves for hell,
By burning sulphur in their rooms,
And breathing oft its pungent fumes.
At times, down there, these priest become,
As once on earth, quite troublesome;
And yet it oft amuses me
To hear them when they disagree.
That they're in hell they oft forget,
And play the role of preachers yet;
Declare that those who are not crammed
Chock full of faith will all be damned.
They oft repeat their catechisms,
Then come to blows about their isms.
One says, 'Believe and be baptized!'
Another says, 'Be circumcised!'
Another cries, with frantic yell,
'Be born again, or go to hell!'
Another swears that 'God will bless you,
If you'll but have our priests confess you!'
And thus a thousand different creeds,
Each claimed to be just what man needs,
Are fiercely urged, till hell is rife

With holy theologic strife.
Indeed, forgetting where they are,
These holy men oft go too far ;
Oft make the toughest devils blush,
And I am forced to make them hush.
Save these disputes, throughout all hell,
The citizens are doing well ;
And this success must vindicate
My mode of ruling my estate."

That the sending of men to hell was, indeed, as taught by the devil, entirely an after-thought with God, we also learn from Matt. xxv, 41, which says : "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, *prepared for the devil and his angels.*" This after-thought was doubtless suggested to God by the priests, who seem to have always controlled him in all his actions, and who have always needed a hell to produce a demand for their services. How "ye cursed" are to find their way to the "everlasting fire" in question we are not informed. If they are to have a guide, who is he to be, and what is to become of him ? Will he remain in hell or come back ?

I have already said that the Jews had no such devil as is taught in the New Testament and by the Christian Church. Having no hell, they had no use and no room for any such personage. They regarded God as equally the source of all good and all evil. The word devil is not found in the Old Testament. The plural, devils, does appear in several places, but, in every instance, it is applied to the false gods of the gentiles, and not to invisible spirits of evil.

In the Old Testament, as we now have it, the word hell does occur in several places. In not one of these places, however, can the word possibly be so tortured as to make it mean a place of eternal punishment such as hell is now said to be. In not one of these places can it possibly be

made to mean a vast region filled with fire and brimstone, and inhabited by devils and the spirits of the damned. Indeed, it is a fact that few Bible critics will venture to deny, that, in every one of these places, the word is made to thus appear by a *mistranslation intentionally* made for the express *purpose* of bringing about an apparent *harmony*, in regard to a place of future punishment, between the teachings of the *Old Testament* and those of the *New*.

This base fraud of the translators, however, is easily detected even without comparing their pretended translations with the so-called originals; detected by the fact that they have rendered ridiculous every passage in which they have inserted the word hell. The following is a fair specimen of them all: "Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the *fish's belly*, and said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me, out of the *belly of hell* cried I, and thou heardest my voice" (Jon. ii, 1-2). In regard to this hell with a man in its belly, our poet-devil says:

"Since priests thus make old Jonah yell
From out the belly of their hell,
Ungodly persons now do wish
To know if *hell* was then a *fish*;
And, if it was, they then desire
To know just how 'twas set on fire.
The answer might be somewhat thus:
That fish, a great unruly cuss,
If not an endless flaming hell,
Was certainly a monstrous swell;
He was, the case to briefly state,
A *hell-of-a-fish*, at any rate."

The word Satan, which has been very improperly applied, as a proper name, to the devil, is found in several passages of the Old Testament. In every one of these passages, however, it means simply an adversary, no

matter who that adversary may be. Indeed, the word *satan* is nothing more than the Hebrew word for adversary. It is a common noun and should always begin with a small letter. It is the name of a condition or phase of character, which may pertain to anyone, and not the name of any individual. Whether good or bad, therefore, every man was a *satan* or adversary to his enemies, no matter who they were or what they were. Moral character had nothing to do in the matter. A good man could be a *satan* as well as could a bad man. Naturally enough, however, every man was inclined to represent his own adversary or *satan* as a bad person. Hence the word came, gradually, to be understood in an unfavorable sense only, and to be used, finally, by a figure of speech called personification, to indicate the source or principle of all evil. This is the present devil of the Christian Church, and as a real person, has, of course, no existence. By beginning the word *satan* with a capital letter, the translators of the Old Testament have, very incorrectly, made it appear that this word is the name of some particular individual. In doing this, these translators have been guilty of great dishonesty.

The first passage in the Bible, in which we find the word *satan* used, is 1 Chron. xxi, 1, which says: "And *Satan* stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." Why he had to stand up to do this, we are not informed. But who was this *Satan*—this adversary? Our priests would fain have us believe that it was the devil that they now teach—that it was their great, though utterly mythical, ally or partner in swindling the people. Most of these priests, however, know full well that, in teaching this doctrine, they are teaching a deliberate falsehood. They know full well that this *satan* was no other than *God himself*. In 2 Sam. xxiv, 1, the very same event is recorded as follows: "And again the anger of the *Lord* was kindled against Israel, and *he* [the *Lord himself*, in order to have a pretext for punishing Israel] moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." Dare

any champion of the Bible read this latter passage and then declare that it was the *devil*—the personified principle of all evil that “moved David?” Was *God* himself the *devil*—the personified principle of all evil? When “the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he” proposed to do them harm—to “give them hell”—as a Christian would express it—he became, of course, for the time, a *satan* or *adversary* to them, and was very properly so called. The “*Satan*” of the one of these parallel passages, and the “*Lord*” of the other, were certainly *one* and the *same person*. There was certainly only one mover or provoker concerned in the affair. In the one passage, this mover or provoker is spoken of in his temporary character of adversary to Israel; and, in order to represent him in this character in the Hebrew language, he has, of course, to be called Satan, there being no other word in that language by which this character could be expressed. In the other passage, on the contrary, he is spoken of in his usual character, and, hence, in this passage, he is, of course, called by his usual appellation, the “*Lord*.”

If, as mentioned in these two parallel passages, the Lord and Satan be not one and the same person, then the two passages indisputably contradict each other, and thus render it certain the one or the other of them is bound to be false. Not knowing which of them is false, we cannot, of course, accept either of them as true. In any view of the case, therefore, these two passages, when taken together, as they must be, utterly fail to establish the Christian’s devil in the Old Testament.

The next passage, in which the word *satan* is used, is Job i, 6, 7: “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord [who was this “*Lord*?” Was he, or was he not, God himself, and the father of the “sons” in question?] and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? [This “*Lord*,” you see, was limited in knowledge. Until he had inquired of Satan, and Satan

had informed him, he did not know where this latter gentleman had been, nor what he had been doing]. Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." In the first two verses of the next chapter, this language is repeated, with the additional information that Satan's object, in thus coming together with the sons of God, was "to present himself before the Lord," the same as they presented themselves.

From all these things we learn that this satan or adversary was an inhabitant, not of hell, as our priests would fain have us believe, but of the earth—of Idumea, the country in which Job lived. We also learn that, on terms of friendship and equality, he was wont to associate with "the sons of God," who were undoubtedly human beings. We learn, further, that he attended the same church or place of worship that they attended, and worshiped the same God that they worshiped. We learn, finally, that all the conversations between the Lord and this person were of the most friendly, respectful, and dignified character. Who, then, and what was this Satan? Evidently a human being—an Idumean, one of the sons of God—one of Job's neighbors. He was probably called an adversary or satan because he differed somewhat from the other sons of God in religious opinions, and, by reason of this difference, created dissensions in the church. From the fact that he was constantly "going to and fro in the earth," he was probably a missionary or traveling preacher of some kind. What better satans could we wish than many of these would make?

Be all these things as they may, however, it is certain that this satan was not the great arch-fiend that plays so conspicuous a part in Christian mythology. Indeed, the scene which we have been considering was evidently an imaginary one that never existed except in the fine poetic mind of the unknown author of the book of Job. Besides this, by nearly all Bible critics, it is now admitted that the

book of Job is a purely gentile production, and that, consequently, it does not constitute any portion of the real Hebrew scriptures. Its entire scenery being located in a gentile country, all of its characters and all of its ideas are certainly gentile. If, therefore, it did teach a real personal devil, this fact would simply go to prove what I claim, that the idea of such a being is of purely gentile origin, and that, consequently, it should never have been incorporated, as it has been, into any portion of the Bible.

We next find the word *satan* used in Ps. cix, 6: "Set thou a wicked man over him [A wicked man, you see, was, occasionally, a great convenience. Had there not been any wicked man, God could not possibly have answered this prayer]; and let Satan stand at his right hand." [Satan, also, was a great convenience—an absolute necessity to God in answering certain prayers.] The entire psalm, of which this is a part, and which is ascribed to David, is a prayer of so horribly cruel and blasphemous a nature that it could have been offered only by one fiend to another. The author is imprecating all manner of evils upon one of his enemies. These evils, however, are all of an earthly nature, and all pertain to the present life. The Satan, therefore, or adversary who is to "stand at his right hand," is just as much an earthly character—just as much a human being—as is the "wicked man" who is to be "set over him," "the extortioner" who is to "catch all that he hath," or "the stranger" who is to "spoil his labor." We still find not the slightest trace of the great sinner-scaring and money-making partner of the Christian priesthood—Old Splitfoot.

In Zech. iii, 1, 2, we read: "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee." This, I believe, is the last passage of the Old Testament in which the word Satan is found. And, in this passage, as

in all the other passages that we have noticed, the Satan mentioned is evidently nothing more than a mere adversary—nothing more than a mere man, who was as capable of being seen as was the high priest, and who, as a man of great and dangerous influence, was opposing the plans of the high priest. He was certainly a person, too, whom the Lord supposed to be still possessed of a conscience, and to be still capable of feeling shame. Otherwise, the Lord would have known that a mere rebuke would have been worse than lost upon him—that it would simply excite his ridicule. Being already sunk as low as it was possible for him to sink, and being already as thoroughly damned as it was possible for him to be, what would Old Splitfoot have cared for such a rebuke? And, knowing this old gentleman's unchangeable character and condition as well as he must have known them, would the Lord have wasted time vainly rebuking him?

If, however, Zechariah's Satan were the devil, we ought not to be surprised at that fact. Born and reared up, as he was, at Babylon, among gentiles who believed in the existence of a bad god or devil—in the existence of the original of the Christians' great arch-fiend—the wonder is that Zechariah did not invest his satan with some of the characteristics of that noted personage. Zechariah lived in that transitional period, called the Babylonish captivity, during which the religion proper of the Hebrews was mostly lost by becoming blended with that of their gentile masters. At the beginning of the Christian era, therefore, nearly all the religious doctrines of the gentiles prevailed, in some form, among the Jews. We would expect, therefore, to find the devil fully acknowledged as a real personage by all the writers who flourished after the beginning of that era. And such we find to be, indeed, the fact.

“Then was Jesus led up of the spirit [what spirit?] into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil” (Matt. iv, 1). Since, as James i, 13, declares, “*God cannot be tempted*

with *evil*," and since *Jesus* was *tempted* of the *devil*, we are bound to admit either that *Jesus* was not *God*, or that the *devil* was not *evil*. Which admission shall we make? The passage that begins this paragraph is the first passage in the whole Bible that clearly refers to the real devil of Christian mythology, Old Splitfoot himself. Here, however, in that grand farce, the founding of the Christian religion, he is unequivocally and uncereemoniously introduced, upon the stage, as a star actor, with whom the author takes it for granted that the people are already well acquainted. This abrupt introduction, however, of so important a personage into the Christians' mythological family of deities is not at all strange. Under the circumstances, it is just what ought to be expected. By this time, the Jewish people were, indeed, already fully acquainted with this important new deity. They had formed his acquaintance at Babylon, some four hundred years before; and many of them, especially those of the lower and more ignorant classes, had adopted him, into their faith, as a real deific personage. No formal introduction of him, therefore, to the people of Matthew's time, no proof of his existence, was deemed necessary. This was especially true in regard to the lower classes of the Jews, who alone, as a rule, became Christians. Indeed, it is a well known fact that all Bibles—all systems of religion—are founded upon a previous belief in the existence of the gods that they severally sustain. This belief is always older than the Bible or the system of religion that sustains it, and, consequently, it is never founded upon, or derived from, that Bible, or that system of religion. To suppose that a Bible, or a system of religion, existed prior to a belief in the existence of the deity that it sustains, would be simply to suppose that the Bible in question was written, or the system of religion elaborated by atheists—by persons who did not themselves believe a word of their own writings or their own teachings. All Bibles and all sys-

tems of religion merely sustain old beliefs. They never originate new ones.

As the Old Testament, without a word of explanation or of proof, simply takes up and sustains the already originated idea of a God, as it had come to exist in the minds of the ignorant and superstitious people for whom that portion of the Bible was written, so, in like manner, the New Testament simply takes up and sustains the already originated idea of a devil, as it had come to exist in the minds of the almost equally ignorant and superstitious people for whom this portion of the Bible was written. The same is also true of the Holy Ghost, who was introduced upon the Christians' mythological stage at about the same time with the devil, and as a kind of antidote for the devil's evil influence upon men. In like manner, the New Testament takes up, sustains, and interweaves into the Christian religion the already existing pagan idea, that, like man and the inferior animals, the gods beget offspring and thus increase their own number. All these ideas of a devil, a Holy Ghost, an increase of gods, etc., are essentially polytheistic in their nature, and purely pagan in their origin. Whatever proofs, therefore, there may be of the existence of God himself, of his son Jesus, of his mother the reputed virgin, of his doubtful kinsman the Holy Ghost; in short, of all the uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, and other relatives, which the polytheistic idea upon which Christianity is founded renders it possible for God to have; whatever proofs, I repeat, there may be of the existence of any of these mythical personages, or of the equally mythical personage, Old Splitfoot, is to be sought, not in the Bible, in which all these personages are mere assumptions, but in the writings and the religious systems of the pagans, among whom the ideas of these various personages originated, and who never knew anything of the Bible or of the Christian religion. In order to prevent the number of Gods from becoming too great, and the polytheistic nature of their religion from becoming too glaring

to suit the monotheistic Jews, the Christians. as soon as God had begotten one son, proceeded at once to render him utterly incapable of begetting any more offspring of either sex, and then took him, his son, and his other kinsman, the Holy Ghost, the three principal Gods of their religion, all composed of paper, and pasted them together into one triple monster-God which they call the Holy Trinity.

From all this, it is evident that, so far as the Bible is concerned, the devil and the Holy Ghost, two of the three actors in the scene now under consideration, were mere assumptions or fictitious characters, and not real persons ; and this fact renders it equally evident that the only remaining character, Jesus, was also a mere assumption or fictitious character, so far, at least, as his presence in this scene was concerned. For it would have been utterly impossible for a real person, Jesus, to be really led into the wilderness, by a fictitious person, the Holy Ghost, and there really tempted, for “forty days and forty nights,” by a fictitious tempter, the devil. The whole story, therefore, is undoubtedly a pure fabrication, this scene never having occurred at all outside of the fertile imagination of the unknown author of the so-called Gospel according to Saint Matthew. That the story is thus a pure fabrication is also rendered still more evident by several very extravagant statements made therein, some of which I will now proceed to notice.

In the second verse, we read : “And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.” That a man in good health, and especially while living in the fresh air out of doors, should be both able and willing to fast thus “forty days and forty nights,” is utterly incredible. Since the Bible itself claims nothing miraculous in this case, the champions of that book have no right to claim any such things. And since the Bible itself does not claim that, in its nature, its composition, and its functions, the body of Jesus differed, in any respect, from the

bodies of mere men, the champions of that book have no right to claim any such difference. They are bound, therefore, either to claim that mere men can fast thus "forty days and forty nights," without injury to their health, and without even becoming hungry, or else admit that the whole story is, as I hold it to be, an incredible fabrication. And now, which horn of this dilemma will they choose?

The champions of the Bible are also bound to admit that, whether it be true or false, this story never has been, and, from its very nature, never can be, of the slightest benefit to mankind or the slightest credit to Jesus. Admitting that he actually did perform the wonderful feat of fasting "forty days and forty nights," of what conceivable use to men was that feat? Are they expected to be fools enough to attempt to follow his example? If not, what are they expected to do about it? How are they expected to be benefited by that example? And as to Jesus, since he did not get hungry during all that time, was not his fasting the same as no fasting at all? Was it any test of his ability to bear suffering? And even if he had suffered the utmost pangs of hunger, would it have been any credit to him to starve himself thus, when there was no necessity for his doing so? In any view of the case, dare the champions of the Bible claim that, by this foolish feat of fasting, he rendered himself any wiser or any better? What would we think of a man who should now undertake to fast "forty days and forty nights," and what would we think of his word if he should declare that, without feeling hunger till the very last, he actually had fasted for so long a period? Would we, in such a case, accept as true the word of any one of our neighbors? If not, how can we accept the word of an anonymous writer of whose character for veracity we know nothing? Besides this, the author of the story, not having been with Jesus on the occasion in question, could not, of his own knowledge, have testified that the fasting feat in question was ever performed. At best, he wrote, of necessity, from mere

hearsay. And what do we know of the value of that hearsay? Who was with Jesus to know that he fasted so long? So far as human society was concerned, was he not entirely alone? And did he ever tell this incredible story concerning himself? Be all these things as they may, have we not several better authenticated cases of recent occurrence, in which mere men have, without any claim to miraculous aid, fasted, or at least claimed to fast, forty days or more?

The fifth verse says: "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple." This was quite a romantic adventure. The pinnacles of the temple were extremely slender spires, or rather spikes, erected upon the roof to keep birds from settling there. After the scaffolding, used by the builders, had been taken down, the top of those pinnacles could be reached only by birds, angels, devils, and other things that could fly; and when they were reached, even by these winged things, they were of such form that birds could not rest upon them. How Jesus and the devil managed to sit upon them without impaling themselves, we are not informed. As to how they reached the top of the pinnacle, the case is very clear. The devil, who seems to have been a very pleasant, obliging, and gentlemanly kind of being, with wings resembling those of a bat, must, of necessity, have picked Jesus up in his claws (the devil has claws instead of hands, and split hoofs instead of feet), and carried him right through the air to the top of that pinnacle, just as a hawk would pick up and carry away a small chicken. It is probable that, after so long a fast, Jesus was very light. In this case, the devil could very easily have lugged him along thus through the air. At any rate, the devil was certainly the principal hero of the whole affair.

From the next verse we learn that if the devil had been mean enough to leave Jesus on that pinnacle, there would have been no way for him to get down except by either

falling or calling for angels with wings to come and help him down. In order to tempt him, and have fun at his expense, the devil did try to make him believe that he would have to get down by jumping off, and ridiculed the idea of his pretending to be the Son of God, when he very prudently declined to get down in any such way. All this goes to prove that the pinnacle had been reached by flight through the air. Indeed, I believe that the champions of the Bible generally admit that this was the way in which that astounding feat was performed. But is the story at all credible? This feat is described as having been performed in open day, when the two reckless adventurers who performed it would have been distinctly visible, upon that inaccessible pinnacle, to all the inhabitants of the entire city. Their flight through the air, going to and from the pinnacle, must also have been witnessed by great numbers. And would not the sight of achievements so wonderful have produced the most intense excitement among the people? How would it be now, if the devil should be seen, in broad daylight, flying, with a man in his claws, to the top of the spire of Trinity Church, or to the head of the goddess of liberty upon the dome of the Capitol at Washington? Would no one take the slightest notice of the matter, or ever afterwards mention it? Would not such total indifference to a phenomenon so wonderful be utterly incredible? Can we, then, reasonably believe that the Jews exhibited just such indifference to just such a phenomenon?

The eighth verse says: "Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." This is, indeed, a whopper. If the author were still living, Gulliver would have to look to his laurels. The story, however, becomes still more monstrous when, in the next verse, we are told that the devil offered, for a very small consideration, to transfer all these kingdoms to Jesus. Does the author expect us to believe that the devil himself

was a fool, or that he was simply trying to make a fool of Jesus? So far from owning all of those kingdoms, and having power to transfer them to another, the devil did not, at that time, own a foot of land outside of hell. He must have known, too, that no intelligent person could be ignorant of this fact, or could look upon his offer to transfer those kingdoms as anything else than a hugely ridiculous joke. Before making him such an offer, therefore, the devil must evidently have come to the conclusion that Jesus was an idiot, or, at best, a very green young man. The devil probably came to this conclusion when Jesus undertook to perform the worse than idiotic feat of fasting "forty days and forty nights." To what other conclusion could he have come? Could he have failed to recognize the patent fact that any one who was fool enough to undertake the performance of such a feat, was also fool enough to be made believe that the devil owned "all the kingdoms of the world," and had power to transfer them to whomsoever he pleased?

By representing the devil's absurd offer as a *real temptation* to Jesus, the author himself virtually brands this latter personage with a degree of ignorance scarcely short of idiocy. He brands him with actually believing that the devil really did own "all the kingdoms of the world," and that, by simply falling down and worshiping the devil, he himself might obtain possession of them all. To have represented Jesus as knowing better than to believe all this, would have been simply to represent the pretended temptation as a mere farce, too silly to be engaged in by two young boys, and not as a *real temptation* at all. Were I, on the same condition, to now make you the same offer, would that offer be to you a real temptation? Certainly not. You would know that these kingdoms were not mine to give. To a fool, however, who could be made believe that I owned "all the kingdoms of the world," such an offer might be a real temptation. If, then, Jesus really was *tempted*, as he is represented to have been, by the ab-

surd offer in question, was he not an egregious *fool*? Which are we to believe, then, that the whole story is a mere fiction, or that Jesus was such a fool? We are compelled to believe the one or the other.

In this excursion to the top of the "exceeding high mountain" in question, as in their trip to the top of the pinnacle of the temple, the devil evidently had to lug the weak and emaciated Jesus along through the air. Indeed, I believe that few, if any, of the champions of the Bible hold that Jesus reached the top of that "exceeding high mountain" in any other way. But since there is no very high mountain near Jerusalem, where is the mountain in question—the mountain so "exceeding high," that, from its summit, may be seen, at one view, "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them?" Do we not all very well know that there never was any such mountain near Jerusalem, or anywhere else? And are we not bound also to know equally well that Jesus and the devil never went to the top of any such mountain? Are we not bound to know that the story of that aerial excursion is all a pure fiction? Is not this story, like many other stories of the Bible, evidently founded upon the now long-since exploded idea that the earth was a small, flat, and stationary body, "all the kingdoms" of which could be seen, at one view, from the summit of an "exceeding high mountain?"

Besides all these things, if Jesus actually did, from the summit of that "exceeding high mountain," see "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," he must have discovered the continent of America, and many other countries then unknown to the people among whom he lived. He must also have discovered the form of the earth, and have thus gained some knowledge of the sublime truths of astronomy. Why, then, instead of spending all his time strolling about the country like a common tramp, telling childish stories, cursing fig-trees for not bearing fruit out of season, eating and drinking till he was called a "gluttonous man and a wine-bibber," etc.,

why, I ask, instead of spending all his time in these things, and in the performing of certain feats of jugglery, all of which are daily excelled at the present time, did he not teach to the people the exceedingly important knowledge which, through the kindness of the devil, he had gained upon the summit of that "exceeding high mountain?" Why did he not tell them of America, of the isles of the sea, of "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them?" Why did he not teach them the truth in regard to the form and the size of the earth, and in regard to her several motions and their results? His followers believed that the earth was flat and stationary; and, afterwards, put to death thousands of innocent persons for teaching doctrines inconsistent with that belief. Why, then, instead of correcting that false and pernicious belief, did he confirm it, by teaching doctrines utterly inconsistent with any other belief? Could any but a very bad being have acted in this way? If the devil would thus kindly carry me to the top of a mountain so "exceeding high," and would thus show me "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," I would make a better use of the knowledge I would thus gain. But who saw the devil take Jesus to the top of the mountain in question, and who informed the author of Matthew that his devilship ever performed any such feat at all?

If these two aerial voyages were ever performed at all, they were certainly among the most remarkable events in the whole life of Jesus. How, then, are we to account for the fact that, of the four Evangelists, only two, Matthew and Luke, make any mention of these events? And how are we to account for the additional and very damaging fact that, in their accounts of these voyages, these two Evangelists virtually contradict each other, Matthew declaring that the voyage to the "exceeding high mountain" was made after that to the "pinnacle of the temple," while Luke declares that the order of the two voyages was

exactly the reverse, that to the "exceeding high mountain" being made first?

Mark, like Matthew and Luke, has Jesus, immediately after his baptism, spend forty days in the wilderness. Unlike these other two Evangelists, however, Mark does not have Jesus fast during that time. On the contrary, he has him "ministered" unto; that is, supplied with every thing he needed, by "angels." Matthew and Luke have Jesus fast, during the whole forty days, in order that, by becoming very hungry, he might be tempted by the devil to try the silly experiment of turning a stone into bread. They seem to think that they have greatly honored Jesus by having him resist this temptation. They do not seem to recognize the fact that they have simply made him act very foolishly in fasting so long for the express purpose of bringing about that temptation in order that, by resisting it, he might gain honor. This was certainly a strange method of getting honor. Mark has Jesus act in a much more sensible manner. He simply has him spend forty days in the wilderness "with the wild beasts," seeing a good time, no doubt, hunting those beasts. Mark also, very wisely, says not a word about those two incredible aerial voyages which Matthew and Luke have Jesus make, on board the old air-ship, Beelzebub, to the top of a "pinnacle of the temple," and to the summit of "an exceeding high mountain." If those two exceedingly wonderful voyages were ever made at all, is not Mark's total silence concerning them utterly unaccountable?

John, who wrote long after Matthew, and who must have heard of all of these pretended events, omits the entire story, the forty days in the wilderness, the fasting, and all. By this omission, he shows clearly that he did not believe that any of these events ever occurred. These were very remarkable events, and, had he believed that they had ever occurred, he would certainly not have failed to mention them. His omission to mention these things, however, is, by no means, the worst. His account of the

movements and the doings of Jesus renders it utterly impossible for this latter personage, immediately after his baptism, or, indeed, at any time after that event, to have spent "forty days and forty nights" in the wilderness, or to have engaged in any very long feat of fasting, or of being tempted by the devil. John, therefore, contradicts, *in toto*, the entire story under consideration. I will first repeat the story, as told by Mark, and then give what John has to say of the movements and the doings of Jesus during the same time covered by this story. You will then perceive that the two accounts are utterly irreconcilable with each other.

"And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came . . . and was baptized of John in Jordan . . . And *immediately* the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted [how tempted?] of Satan; and was with the wild beasts [in what respect was he with them, and what kind of wild beasts were they?]; and the angels [what were those angels?] ministered [what was the nature of the ministrations?] unto him" (Mark i, 9, 12, 13). This account certainly has Jesus spend the first forty days, immediately following his baptism, in the wilderness among "the wild beasts," and does not have him begin to choose his disciples till after the expiration of these forty days. [See the next six verses of the same chapter.]

"And [at the time of baptizing Jesus] John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him . . . Again the next day after [the next day after that on which Jesus was baptized], John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus . . . They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day . . . The day following [being the second day after his baptism] Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Fol-

low me. . . . And the the third day [after his baptism] there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee ; and the mother of Jesus was there ; and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage After this [after the close of the marriage feast which, according to custom, probably lasted seven days] he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren [the so-called virgin, you see, had several other children besides Jesus ; and, following the very doubtful example of Jesus, the whole family, the virgin mother and all, had become strollers or vagrants], and his disciples [by this time he had with him quite a crowd of idlers and vagrants, none of whom had any visible means of subsistence] ; and they continued there not many days. And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem " (John i, 32-43, and ii, 1, 2, 12, 13). From this time onward, according to John's further testimony, Jesus was never absent from among his followers, and, so, far from ever being guilty of the folly of fasting "forty days and forty nights" at a time, or any portion of that period, he was wont to indulge so freely in the luxuries of the table, for which he never paid, that he came to be commonly called "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber." Whatever John's testimony be worth, therefore, its entire weight goes to prove that the first devil-story of the New Testament—the first story, in fact, in the whole Bible concerning Old Splitfoot as we now have him, is nothing more nor less than a monstrous imposition.

"As they [Jesus and his disciples] went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils " (Matt. ix, 32-34). From this, we learn that, in the time of Jesus, the devils, who were all doubtless descended from the one original devil—from the one primitive source of all sin—had so increased in numbers that they had come to constitute a nation with a regular government at the head of which was a prince,

elsewhere called Beelzebub. This prince is supposed to be the original devil himself, the father as well as the ruler of all the other devils. As to who were the mothers of all these young devils, the Lord only knows. From this same passage we also learn that the devils had abandoned the "everlasting fire prepared for" their special benefit, and had come to reside, like tapeworms or something of that kind, inside of the bodies of men. These are all very important facts. Why the devils chose the body of a man as their place of abode—as the country in which to carry on their government—we are not informed. I suppose, however, that they chose this situation simply because of its warmth—simply to avoid taking cold, to which, had they been exposed to the open air, they would have been very liable after so long a stew in hell's horribly hot climate. As to the man, inside of whom they dwelt, if he was not, like Jonah's fish, a regular little "*hell*," he certainly was, to say the least of the matter, in a *hell-of-a-condition*.

Luke (viii, 27-33) gives quite a romantic account of another adventure with devils: "And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils [blue devils, of course] long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. [What then was this naked devilish fellow doing in the "city," and how did he manage, "in the tombs," to get his living? Was he a ghoul living upon the bodies of the dead?] . . . And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? [Jesus, you see, was not omniscient. He did not know the names of the devils.] And he said Legion: because many devils [about five thousand] were entered into him. And they besought him [besought whom, Jesus or the man?] that he would not command them to go out into the deep. [How these poor devils, just released from "everlasting fire," did fear water!] And there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him [who besought him, the devils or the swine?] that he would suffer them [suffer whom, the devils or the swine?]

to enter into them. [Into whom, the devils or the swine?] And he suffered them. [Suffered whom, the devils or the swine?] Then went the devils out of the man [out of which end of him did they go?], and entered into the swine [at which end of the swine did they enter, and what effect had their entrance upon the price of pork?]; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked." And what became of the devils who, at the time of this catastrophe, were inside of the swine? Were these poor devils choked, too, the same as were the unfortunate swine? They must have been, since they were never afterwards heard of, and since, being totally unused to water, they would drown very easily. If they were, indeed, all thus drowned, it was certainly a serious practical joke that Jesus played upon them. He might as well have sent them out into the deep at once, as to thus send them into the swine and then drive the swine into the deep. After having just agreed that he would not send them out into the deep, his trick was a cruel breach of promise, and was too mean to be either justifiable or funny. If, instead of being cruelly and unnecessarily drowned by this trick, those swine had been killed and eaten, with the devils still in them, what effect would the presence of the devils in the pork have had upon the eaters? Could any amount of cooking have so thoroughly killed those devils, fire-proof as they were, as to render their presence in the pork entirely harmless? Of this affair, our poet-devil, the great Old Splitfoot himself, speaks as follows :

“Again, upon a certain day,
As two Evangelists do say,
A man came forth from out the gloom,
In which he dwelt in some old tomb,
And who, as he himself confessed,
A legion devils then possessed,
And loudly unto Jesus called,

As if his soul was much appalled.
He'd heard that Jesus went about,
And cast from men all devils out,
He therefore begged, or rather they,
That, if they must, without delay,
Depart from out this human hell,
In which they'd long been wont to dwell,
And which, they said, 'twould greatly grieve,
And almost break their hearts to leave—
They begged, I say, his grace divine
To give them homes inside a swine.
And Jesus, ever kind, they say,
To devil's e'en, when they do pray,
Did grant at once this fair request,
And gave a swine to be possessed.
The devils then, all in a trice,
Assured of quarters warm and nice,
Like warriors trained, fell into line,
And soon pulled up inside the swine.
The deed that Jesus did that day,
In giving that same swine away,
Was wondrous kind, all Christians swear,
And calls for praises everywhere.
But then the swine, 'tis now well known,
That he then gave was not his own ;
And anyone can generous be
With other people's property ;
With his own swine, 'tis clear to us,
He never would have acted thus.

This wondrous tale some things doth lack
Which, far too long, have been kept back,
We ought to know by just what route
Those devils marched from that man out.
We'd also like to know full well
How devils could in porkers dwell ;
Why they such quarters should desire,
How large a space they would require,

And what they'd do, when cold, for fire :
And whether they the tail or snout
Would use when passing in and out."

Luke has this wonderful affair occur in the country of the Gadarenes; Matthew, in that of the Gergesenes. Luke has only one man, on this occasion, possessed of devils; Matthew has two men so possessed. Luke has his one man come out of the city to meet Jesus: Matthew has his two men come out of the tombs. Luke has his swine drowned in a lake; Matthew has his drowned in a sea. Thus, in this one short devil story, we have four utterly irreconcilable discrepancies between the accounts of these two authors. In some parts, Mark's account agrees with that of Matthew; in other parts, with that of Luke. Seeing how the story, as told severally by the other gospel writers, was received among intelligent people, John, who wrote last of all, very wisely concluded to omit it entirely, and to make up a more reasonable one in its place. Letting all these things pass, however, let us see what we can learn from this truly wonderful story.

Among the Romans, the Jews after their conquest by the Romans, and several other nations, like a regiment or a brigade with us, a legion was a regularly organized military body containing, usually, about 5,000 men. It was in use only among nations considerably advanced in civilization, and whose wars were carried on in a regular and systematic manner. The fact, therefore, that the devils in question were organized into a legion, or, at least, knew the nature and use of a legion, together with the fact already noticed, that they were ruled by a prince, constitutes proof positive that they possessed a regular form of government, that they were considerably advanced in civilization, and that their wars, if they were so unwise as to have any, were carried on in a regular and systematic manner.

From all this, it is evident that those devils must have possessed cities, towns, schools, courts, churches, and all

other things essential to a civilized condition. It is also evident that, to some extent at least, they must have engaged in manufactures, commerce, and many other occupations without which civilization could not exist. But how large could they have been and yet have had plenty of room to thus live, an entire nation of them together, and carry on their multitudinous occupations inside of the body of a single man or of a single swine, and that, too, without perceptibly changing his shape or increasing either his size or his weight? In a preceding paragraph, I suggested that they might have been something like tape-worms. We now perceive, however, that that suggestion was not a good one. A single legion, and much more an entire nation of creatures as large as tape-worms, would instantly burst a man larger than one of Munchausen's Brobdignagians, or a swine of similarly immense proportions. It is now evident that those devils could not have been any larger than are those animalculæ called trichinæ, which often very injuriously infest the bodies of swine, and, occasionally, those of men. Indeed, who knows but that those devils were trichinæ, and that trichinæ are devils? Let them have been what they may, however, they must, for creatures so extremely diminutive, have possessed wonderful lungs to enable them, from the inside of the man, to carry on with Jesus a clearly audible conversation.

The champions of the Bible denounce us as Infidels, and confidently declare that we will be eternally roasted in fire and brimstone, if we do not implicitly believe everything we find recorded in that book. In order, therefore, to save us from so unutterably fearful a fate, and to enable us to march, with flying colors, through the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem, into the unspeakable joys of heaven, will not these champions be so kind as to help us believe this exceedingly monstrous devil-story by giving all the information they can in regard to the devils mentioned in it? The story, you see, entirely eclipses that of Munchausen's Liliputians. When compared with these

devils, those inch-long Liliputians were immense giants. In order to be able to believe this story, therefore, and to thus escape the otherwise unavoidable torments of an endless hell, we certainly need all the assistance we can possibly obtain.

Will these champions, then, please inform us when God made those devils, where he made them, how he made them, of what kind of material he made them, how long it took him to make them, and why he made them at all? Were they among the things that God pronounced "very good?" Were those devils all made at the same time, of the same material, and in the same manner, or at different times, of different material, and in different manners? Were they all made males, or were both sexes represented among them? If they were all made males, of what use was their sex? If both sexes were represented among them, did they breed and have little squalling baby devils, and did these little devils have to take any kind of soothing syrup to keep them quiet? Why were those devils never known to infest the bodies of men or of swine until about the time that Jesus is said to have lived? Do they still thus infest the bodies of men and of swine? If they do, why do not our priests cast them out? Does not Jesus strictly command and fully empower all those whom he authorizes to preach his gospel to heal the sick, to cast out devils, and to do all the other works which he himself was wont to do when he was upon earth? And does he not, in the most positive manner, promise to be with these his preachers of the gospel, in these works, "always," "even unto the end of the world?" If, then, our priests are not able to do these things, is not their want of power a positive proof either that they are impostors, not called to preach the gospel and not true believers in Jesus, or that he was himself an impostor and his promises worth nothing at all? If his promise was true, and if these priests were his true ministers of the gospel, would they not certainly be able to perform all the works that he so

positively promised that they should perform? Was his promise a lie, then, or are our priests all impostors? If, on the other hand, those devils do not any longer infest the bodies of men and of swine, when did they cease to do so, and what caused them to cease? Does the nature of any living creature ever entirely change? If not, and if it was ever the nature of devils to infest the bodies of men and of swine, would it not still be their nature to do the same? And why did Jesus include the casting out of devils among the works that were to continue to be done "even unto the end of the world," if devils were not to continue thus long to infest the bodies of men? Could they continue thus to be cast out after there had ceased to be any to cast out? Jesus says that they shall and that they will continue thus long to be cast out; and, in saying this, he virtually declares that they shall and will continue to infest the bodies of men "even unto the end of the world." Does he lie when he says this, or do those champions of the Bible lie who declare that devils have already ceased to infest the bodies of men? Finally, where are those devils now, in what are they occupied, how do they manage to make a living, and what proof have we that our priests know anything about them? May not these priests themselves be infested with them?

If the man whose case we are now considering—or, rather, if one of your own neighbors were now to assert that his body was inhabited by a whole nation of intelligent beings, would you believe his assertion to be literally true? If not, how can you believe in the literal truth of an exactly similar assertion that reaches you through a thousand extremely doubtful hearsays? Does a false story ever become true, or an incredible one ever become credible, by passing through many doubtful hands before it reaches you? Can you believe all the absurd and incredible stories of the Bible and still have any just claim to intelligence and consistency?

I have now considered the devil or Satan of the Bible

in four different forms of being or phases of character; and these, I believe, are all the forms of being or phases of character under which he presents himself in the entire Bible. There is, indeed, a fifth form or phase under which he now quite commonly presents himself. This is that of an invisible and intangible spirit, indefinitely expanded, wonderfully intelligent at every point in its entire extent, but entirely destitute of body, of parts, and of shape. This form or phase, however, seems to be much more modern than any portion of the Bible. The first of his four Bible forms, is that of a pagan god. In this form he may be a living bull, a living man, a golden calf, a carved image, a serpent, a monkey, an elephant, or any other object of idolatrous worship. His second form is that of a mere adversary. In this form, he may be any man or even God himself. His third form is that of a hideous monster, the form of whose body is constantly changing, sometimes being that of a winged dragon, sometimes that of a man with horns, split hoofs, and a spear-shaped tail, etc. In this form he possesses great intelligence and great power, demoralizes most of God's people and takes them to hell, and keeps God himself, as it were, in hot water all the time. By entirely taking away his body in this form, and indefinitely expanding what is left of him—if, indeed, anything at all be left—we have him in his fifth or most modern form, which I have already described, and in which he is now most popular with his allies, the priests. His fourth form is that of a microscopic parasite that infests the bodies of men and of swine. The first two of these four Bible forms pertain to the Old Testament and to the Jews, and involve nothing either absurd or incredible. The other two pertain to the New Testament and to the Christians, and involve the very climax both of absurdity and of incredibility.

The Bible contains many other passages in which the devil, either as one individual or as many, is mentioned. In every one of these passages, however, he falls under

some one of these four forms just described. I need not, therefore, notice any more of them. Indeed, most of them appear only in extremely silly and incredible stories which were evidently composed and written by very ignorant and superstitious men, for the benefit, or, rather, for the deceiving and the enslaving of men still more ignorant and superstitious. Concerning most of the instances, too, in which the devil, in any form and in any number, has appeared upon the stage, the writers of the Bible give utterly irreconcilable accounts. I have shown that they do this in the case which we have just had under consideration. Indeed, to me, the whole subject of the devil seems so ridiculous that I have found myself unable to treat it with that degree of seriousness which the priests, the devil's best friends, would fain have us believe that it demands. To so ridiculous a subject, ridicule alone seems to be appropriate. Among intelligent people, the doctrines both of devils and witches, although both are clearly taught, and equally so, in the Bible, have long since been rejected as degrading remnants of the ignorance and the superstition of the dark ages. Even many of our ministers of the gospel, fearfully hardened though they generally are, no longer have the face to preach either the doctrines of devils or of witches to intelligent congregations. The preaching of any of these doctrines is now neither demanded nor tolerated by any except those who, in intelligence, are at least a century behind the times. If, then, you believe any of the witch stories, or any of the devil stories of the Bible, you may be sure that your intelligence is of a very low order.

In the beginning of this lecture, I promised to show that the Bible gives the devil a much better moral character than it gives God himself. I will now fulfil this promise by closing with a parallel between the moral characters of these two most notable personages. This parallel is from the pen of our poet-devil, from whose writings I have already several times quoted :

“Both God and myself, as you doubtless all know,
Were chronic old bachelors, long time ago ;
Indeed, if I do not most sadly forget,
We are both of us chronic old bachelors yet—
I know that I am, and I cannot recall
Such fact as God’s having been married at all.
And yet, I suppose, ’tis unknown to no one,
That Jesus was this same old bachelor’s son ;
That Mary, betrothed though she was to another,
Became of this bachelor’s child the fond mother.
And now if God was, indeed, Jesus’s pa,
And never was married to Jesus’s ma,
I’m sure I cannot, for the life of me, see
How such a relation could possibly be,
And not be adult’rous, as much as ’tis when
Wives now are made mothers by bachelor men.
Hence God is convicted, you plainly do see,
Of adult’ry, which is not e’en charged against me.

“And then, when you come to the murderers’ list,
His name will be found, while my own will be missed—
Examine the records, and then you will see
That murder hath never been charged against me.
But these very records abundantly show
A host of foul murders against my great foe—
Whole nations at once, both the young and the old,
He’s slain for mere sport, or for land, or for gold.
Men, women, and children thus slain in one day,
By him, have been left to rot just where they lay ;
And while their bones there have grown white in the sun,
Their butcher’s been praised as the Merciful One,
And I have been cursed as man’s natural foe,
Although, as I’ve said, there is no one can show
That even amid the most desperate strife,
I ever deprived any man of his life.
Now this is unfair, as you see at a glance,
Yet never before have I had a fair chance
To show up the facts and to prove that no blame

Hath ever been justly attached to my name.
But now the just judges who hear me to-day,
O'er whom only truth, mighty truth, can have sway,
Will free me, I'm sure, from the terrible wrong
Which churches and priests have inflicted so long.
Then forth there will gleam, from the vast page of fame,
What heaven once honored, my great angel name ;
And then in the splendor of truth growing bright,
My face will resume its long, long hidden light.
I once, as you know, was the bright morning star,
Of heaven's whole host, the most brilliant by far ;
And such I still hope in the future to be,
When justice, full justice, hath been done to me.

“The priests have oft called me the father of lies,
But charges unfounded like this I despise ;
Indeed, the whole army of priests I defy
To prove that I ever told even one lie ;
Or ever encouraged my friends to deceive,
Or tell what themselves did not fully believe.
If they will do this, I will then show them ten,
By God himself told to his own chosen men ;
And hundreds, perhaps, which he's had others tell—
Great whopper lies, too, never equaled in hell.

“'Tis a fact, which no priest will attempt to dispute,
That God showed to Adam a certain rare fruit
Which beat every other, in qualities fine,
But which, for man's table, he did not design.
That fruit, for some reason, I never knew what,
Was placed by the Lord in so central a spot,
That Adam and Eve found it right in their way,
As daily they went to their labor or play.
Hence God grew uneasy lest they should forget,
And eat all these luscious fall pippins up yet ;
He, therefore declared, with a terrible oath,
That he, without mercy, would murder them both
The day they should venture so much as to bite
The fruit that thus temptingly hung in their sight.

“This frightened old Adam, a coward at best,
And put the fruit question with him quite at rest ;
But not so with Eve, as we elsewhere have seen,
She could not believe that the Lord was so mean,
So horribly cruel, so wanting in sense,
As thus to kill both for so slight an offense.
She firmly believed that the Lord was but joking,
And hence after tea, while old Adam sat smoking,
She took her pet serpent and went, you all know,
To that very tree which had tempted her so.
She could not imagine just what 'twas to die,
And said she'd find out, or she'd like to know why ;
Then, urged by the serpent, as elsewhere I've said,
She plucked a fall pippin and ate it like bread.
Then feeling at once that the fruit did her good,
She took some to Adam as soon as she could,
She hoped that this fruit, so delicious and mellow,
Would tend to improve this indecent old fellow.
And he growing bolder than ever before,
Quick bolted the lot, and was eager for more,
For he, too, perceived that it opened their eyes,
And made them more modest, as well as more wise,
And God did not do as he'd sworn that he would,
But let them live on just as long as they could ;
And now, if they wish, let my enemies try
To prove against me so enormous a lie,

“Again, the Lord swore to old Moses and band
To lead them all safe to a fair happy land
He had them all start, but, because of the tears,
He caused them to wander for forty long years ;
Indeed, all his promises, solemnly spoken,
And all of his oaths were remorselessly broken ;
He went so far e'en as to boast that their woe
Should cause them his base 'breach of promise' to know ;
That far from possessing a land good and fair,
Their bones should there bleach in the wild desert air.

And will my worst enemies venture to say
That ever I lied in so monstrous a way?

“For helping plague Job, I have suffered much blame,
But who, in my place, would have not done the same?
The part I then acted, you all understand,
I acted for God, by his own strict command;
And, let my foes blame me as much as they may,
'Twas his place to order and mine to obey.
If my part was wrong, was not his part still worse?
Did he not compel me to cause Job to curse?
I simply did that which he strictly directed,
And set Job to cursing; what else was expected?
But how the false story did ever get out,
Concerning Job's patience, is mingled with doubt;
For greater impatience I never have known
Than was by that famous old gentleman shown.
He cursed like a sailor till hustled right out
By Madame Job's orders, who had not a doubt
That Joby, in sky-larking somewhere about,
A plague had contracted, too dreadful to name,
But which was attended with uttermost shame,
And greatly she feared he might give her the same.
She e'en went so far as to wish, so they say,
That God would at once put him out of the way;
Would give her a chance to secure a new man,
For capturing whom she e'en then had a plan;
She seemed, too, to think that God promptly would do it,
If Job should curse *him*, and thus anger him to it.
She therefore urged Job just to let himself loose,
To curse God like thunder and heap such abuse
On him as would leave him no power to refrain,
And thus, for her sake, try to get *himself* slain.
But Job, when her object was well understood,
Declared he'd not peg out that way if he could;
He'd live just to spite her, and now you know why
He did not curse *God*, just as well as do I.

“But letting this pass, I'll describe with sad heart.

A drama in which God assigned me a part,
And forced me to act it, just as he directed,
Although, at the first, I most strongly objected.
I told him 'twould injure my character so
That men would all hate me, where'er I might go ;
But no one, he said, but myself, could he trust
This part to perform, and that, therefore, I must.

“The first thing assigned was to tempt his own son,
And see how well qualified he was to run
The race set before him, and this you're aware,
Demanded great courage as well as great care.
This task I accomplished as well as I could,
But Jesus stood firm, as I knew that he would ;
And yet, though my conduct he did not think right,
His language to me was all kind and polite.

“The next thing assigned me, I would not agree
To do until God had long reasoned with me.
He said 'twas a part of his plan of salvation,
And that, if I failed him, he'd let all creation
March straight into hell, without further ado,
And, knowing full well that all this was quite true,
I did as he wished, and you now plainly see
You owe your salvation to none more than me.
But how did I help, you would gladly be knowing,
To start God's machine of salvation to going?

“I crawled into Judas Iscariot, one day,
And showed him just how he could make Jesus 'pay—
Just how from this business, this Christ enterprise,
He could fill his own pockets, if he were but wise ;
And Judas, a Yankee, took in, at a flash,
The plan I proposed, and was soon flush of cash.
And this was the part that God forced me to take,
Declaring his plan of salvation at stake—
Declaring my aid must be promptly supplied,
Or men to damnation would all be let slide.
He said that his son must be crucified then—
Must die like a rogue for the good of all men—

That since he'd adopted this horrible plan,
On none other would he consent to save man.
He could not consistently pardon e'en one,
He said, till the people should murder his son;
That I, by assisting them kindly in this,
Would give them a title to mansions of bliss.
He said that so soon as this deed should be done,
His pard'ning machine would be started to run;
And that, by performing the part he'd assigned,
The Savior I'd be of the whole human kind.

“I could not conceive how this one murder more
Could pard'ning make easier than 'twas just before;
But God said it would, and I dared not reply,
When Jesus was doomed in this manner to die;
Nor when God required me, without more delay,
To enter Saint Judas and make him betray
The innocent Jesus, and thus bring about
His death, which the people could not do without.
My part I disliked, but since hell was then crammed
With men of all nations, eternally damned—
Since room I could find for no further supplies,
I entered at last into this enterprise.

“My work I did well, and Saint Judas did his,
And I cannot yet understand why it is
That Jesus is worshiped, while Judas and I
Are treated like rogues, or in silence passed by.
'Twas needful that Jesus should perish just thus,
And this would have failed, had it not been for us.
Since heaven depended upon us all three,
You ought to praise Judas, and Jesus, and me
And then, on reflection, no one can refuse
The portion of praise justly due to the Jews;
For had it not been for the aid of this nation,
What would have become of God's plan of salvation?
Had no one been willing that victim to slay,
What would you be doing for hell-room to-day?
If aught there was wrong in thus murd'ring his son,

That wrong was God's own, for he had the deed done ;
And we were but instruments, helpless, you see,
And bound to do just what he chose to decree.
His might, then upon us, we could not withstand,
Nor could we escape his omnipotent hand ;
Indeed, there's no creature beneath the bright sun,
Can thwart what the Lord hath resolved to have done.
His infinite presence all nature doth fill,
And nothing can happen which he doth not will ;
Then why do you link with my much abused name
Those evils for which he alone is to blame ?
Why do you thus wrongfully persecute me
For being just what he hath made me to be ?
My nature he fixed, and it seems very strange
That I should be cursed for what I cannot change.
As well might you curse for their nature divine,
The angels of light, as to curse me for mine.
And now having done, to my mythical hell,
I gladly return—fare ye well ; fare ye well !

LECTURE SIXTEENTH.

THE HEAVEN AND THE HELL OF THE BIBLE.

ALTHOUGH, in preceding lectures, I have often incidentally noticed both the heaven and the hell of the Bible, yet, on account of the immense importance usually attached to these two utterly mythical institutions, I have thought better to devote an entire lecture to the consideration of them alone. In this consideration, I shall find it necessary to repeat many things which, as I have just stated, have already been incidentally given in former lectures. Indeed, having from the start intended to make every one of the lectures of this entire course, to some extent at least, complete in itself, I have often found it necessary to notice the same things in several different lectures. The things thus repeated, however, are usually of so great importance that they cannot be noticed too frequently.

The word *heaven* is derived from the verb *heave*, and, primarily, means something raised, bulged, or *heaved* up, as the sky seems to be, and as the ancients believed that it actually was. Indeed, the sky, which, as I have elsewhere said, was supposed by the ancients to be a solid body or firmament, being by far the most prominent object thus *heaved up*, came finally to be designated specially as the "*heaved*," or, as the word was formerly written, the "*heave-en*," that is, the thing heaved or bulged up. By a slight contraction, the old word *heave-en* becomes our present word *heaven*, which, with a few priestly additions, still retains its original signification. We always think

and speak of heaven as something that is *up*—as something heaved or bulged outward from the earth, just as the shell of an egg is heaved or bulged up or outward from the yolk. We never think or speak of heaven as something *depressed*—as something on a *level* with us, or *below* us.

The first verse of the Bible says: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” From this, it is clear that the heaven, like the earth, was something that had to be *made*; that the heaven and the earth are of the *same age*; that, until it was thus *made*, there was no such thing, no such place in existence, as the *heaven*; that, during the entire eternity which, of necessity, must have preceded the creation, God could not possibly have had any such place as the *heaven* in which to *dwell*; and that, consequently, the heaven is not properly the place of God’s abode. Of necessity, his *place of abode* must be at least as *old* and at least as *extensive* as is *he himself*. If, indeed, he himself be infinite in both his extent and his duration, so, of necessity, must his place of abode be. Space alone, in its entirety, fills this description. The little heaven of the Bible, made at the same time with the earth and in connection with it, fills no part of the description.

What the heaven, as here mentioned, was, it is somewhat difficult to determine. As we have already seen, it was something that was made, the same as was the earth. It could not have been space, since, from its very nature, this is necessarily uncreated and eternal. Neither could it have been the firmament or solid blue sky, since this was not made till the next day. Being begun with a small letter, and being limited by the particle *the*, the word cannot be the name of any particular object, or of any particular place. It is bound to be a common noun, and it seems to have been applied, in a general way, to the atmosphere, and all else that seemed to be heaved up from the earth. In other words, it seems to have been the comple-

ment of the earth—all that there then was of the universe, except the solid body of the earth herself. As we proceed, this view will become still more clear. Since the heaven was the thing heaved up, it could not have existed till the earth was made for it to be heaved up from.

“And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven” (Gen. i, 6–8). Here we have a new Heaven or heaved up object which is much more definite than was the general heaven or heaved up portion of the universe which was made on the day before. This new word Heaven, being begun with a capital letter, and being unaccompanied by any limiting particle, is evidently a proper noun—a name applied to some particular place or to some particular object. What that particular place or that particular object was, we are clearly informed. It was simply the firmament or solid sky which was supposed to be heaved up, like a vast inverted bowl, over a flat and stationary earth, and to separate the waters which were on the surface of the earth from certain other equally vast quantities of water which were supposed to have been placed, by God himself, somewhere far above the surface of the earth. In other words, Heaven was simply the proper name of that particular heaved up object which, because of its supposed-to-be peculiarly firm or solid nature, was usually called the firmament or supporter—the supporter of vast bodies of water, which were placed upon its upper surface, and of the sun, moon, and stars which, to keep them from falling, were set or stuck, like nails, into its under surface. You will please keep in mind all these things.

“And God said, Let there be light in the firmament of the heaven . . . And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the

night; he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth" (Gen. i, 14-17). In these passages, we twice find the expression "the firmament of the heaven." Since, however, as I have already shown, Heaven is simply another name of the firmament or solid sky, this expression will evidently retain the same meaning if rendered, "the *Heaven* of the *heaven*." Or since, in the sense in which it is first used in the Bible, the word heaven is usually employed in the plural, the expression will evidently still retain the same meaning if rendered, "the *Heaven* of the *heavens*;" or with the particle *the* omitted, as it usually is, "the *Heaven* of *heavens*." In this latter form, the expression is, indeed, often used in the Bible; and when thus used, it means simply the firm or solid portion of the general heaven or heaved up portion of the universe; and, since this solid portion was supposed to be above all the other portions, the expression also evidently means, "the *highest* heaven," or "the *highest part* of heaven." All Bible critics, I believe, agree that this view is correct.

From all of this, it is evident that the firmament—the limited or special Heaven which was made on the second day, was simply the highest and firmest part—the roof or covering, as it were, of the great heaved up mass of atmosphere, clouds, etc., that constituted the general heaven (or heavens) which was made on the first day. The form of this firmament—this highest Heaven, this Heaven of heavens, this roof of heaven—was that of an immense bowl or hollow hemisphere inverted over a flat and stationary earth. Indeed, it was nothing more nor less than that which we now call the sky, and which, although it is now known to be nothing but the color of the atmosphere that surrounds us, we seem to see, like a vast inverted blue bowl, resting with its brim or edge, called the horizon, upon the earth. As we have already seen, there were supposed to be, on the upper or convex surface of this firmament, vast bodies of water; while, to keep them

from falling down upon the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars were stuck like nails into its under or concave surface. Between the earth and the under surface of this concavo-convex firmament, there was a vast open space occupied only by the atmosphere, the clouds, etc. It is evidently of this space that the author speaks when, in the twentieth verse, he says that the fowls "may fly above the earth in the open [or hollow part of the] firmament of heaven." As we learn from the seventh and eighth chapters of Genesis, this firmament or heaven was also provided with windows or valves which could be opened and closed at pleasure, and through which the waters which were above the firmament could be made to pour down upon the earth.

We have now seen that the original design of the firmament or Heaven was to sustain the vast bodies of water which were supposed to be placed above it and all the heavenly bodies which were supposed to be set into its solid substance. It was entirely an after-thought of the Creator, or, rather of the priests, to make this Heaven the dwelling-place of the gods, and a later thought still to make it the abode of human beings after death. This Heaven was supposed to be only a few thousand feet above the surface of the earth. Many nations, therefore, had certain mountains, the summits of which were supposed, especially by the ignorant, who, from superstitious fear, never ascended them, to reach Heaven, or, at least, to approach it so near that the gods were wont to "step down and out" of it upon them to meet their special favorites, the priests, who alone ventured to seek those sacred summits. Jehovah is said to have often thus stepped "down and out" of this Heaven to meet his great favorite, the cunning and unscrupulous old Moses, upon the top of Mount Sinai, which is one of the most noted god-mountains mentioned in the Bible. Those people, however, whose countries lay entirely in the plains, could not thus reach heaven, or even come within speaking distance

of the gods that dwell therein. In order to attain either of these very desirable objects, therefore, these people had to resort to the building of very high towers whose tops should "reach unto heaven;" and, as we learn from the eleventh chapter of Genesis, even this extremely slow and expensive method was not always attended with the success which so laudable an undertaking deserved.

"And they said, Go to, let us build us . . . a tower whose top may reach unto heaven" (Gen. xi: 4). This shows conclusively that those people believed Heaven to be at no great distance above the earth; that they really expected to reach Heaven with their tower. Had they believed that the distance to Heaven was very great, they would surely not have thus foolishly attempted to reach that place by means of such a tower. From the sixth and the seventh verses, we learn that God also fully believed that Heaven was directly over the earth, and at no great distance from it; and that, if permitted to go on with their work, those people actually would reach Heaven with their tower. When, therefore, he had come down and examined the tower, of which it seems that he had heard, but which he had never before seen, he appeared to be greatly alarmed at the near approach of those enterprising people to success in their stupendous undertaking. Almost in despair, therefore, he exclaimed: "Behold, . . . now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do;" and, believing that there was no time to be lost, he said: "Go to, let us [himself and the other gods] go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." By thus confounding their language, he put a stop to their work which he evidently believed would, if permitted to be completed, enable them to reach Heaven, and to cause him and the other gods an immense amount of trouble if not of danger.

Had those people lived in a mountainous country, they would doubtless have tried to ascertain the height of

Heaven, by ascending a mountain, before undertaking to reach it by means of such a tower. Living, however, as they did, in a plain, they had no means of obtaining this extremely important information. Their ignorance, therefore, in regard to this matter, was very natural and very pardonable. But what are we to say in regard to God's equal ignorance in regard to this same matter? Since he claimed to have made both Heaven and earth, should he not have had a more nearly correct idea in regard to their distance apart? If he had not fully believed that they were so near together that, if let alone, the people, by means of their tower, actually could reach Heaven, would he have thus so incontinently come down and stopped their work by confounding their language? He now knows that men could never possibly build a tower high enough to reach Heaven. No matter, then, how high men might now build a tower, his fears of their thus reaching Heaven would not be in the least excited, and the builders might rest assured that he would never go to the trouble of coming down to stop their work by confounding their language.

As to the expression, "Go to," which, in this story, we find used both by the tower builders and by God himself, it constituted a kind of slang which, when put in the mouth of a God, was about as dignified as would be the expressions, "You bet," "Bully for you," "How is that for high?" etc. Had the author been an average American writer, and especially a Californian, he would doubtless have put some of these expressions into the mouth of his God. I once knew a Californian lady who, having just experienced religion at a camp-meeting, and being asked how she felt, joyfully exclaimed: "Glory to God! I feel just *bully*! You *bet* I do!" What a Bible she could have written!

"Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven" (Gen. xix, 24). From this passage we learn three very

important facts. The first of these is that heaven was directly over Sodom and Gomorrah, and at no very great height above them. Had it not been so situated, the fire and brimstone which fell from it would not have fallen upon those two unfortunate cities. The second is that, by this time, God had permanently taken up his abode in heaven, directly over those two cities. The third and last is that heaven was then filled with fire and brimstone. You will carefully notice that the brimstone and fire came "from the *Lord*, out of *heaven*." Unless, therefore, the champions of the Bible can prove that all the fire and brimstone of heaven were exhausted on the occasion in question they are bound to admit that the place is still bountifully supplied with those two commodities so essential to the Christian Religion. In the absence of this proof, which can never be given, will these champions please inform us in what respect heaven differs from hell, when both places are so bountifully supplied with fire and brimstone?

From the following passages, we likewise learn that heaven was directly over the earth, or, at least, over certain portions of it, and at so small a height that dews and rain could fall from heaven upon the earth. "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine" (Gen. xxvii, 28). "But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh the water of the rain of heaven. And then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain" (Deut. xii, 11, 17). "And the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights" (Gen. vii, 11, 12). "The fountains also of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained" (Gen. viii, 2). From these same passages we also learn that dews and rains come directly from heaven, which can be opened at pleasure to let them fall, or closed to prevent them from falling. These dews and rains, as we learn from many other pas-

sages of the Bible, are supplied from those vast bodies of water which, on the second day of creation, were placed on the upper surface of the firmament or heaven. Let the champions of the Bible, therefore, take heed lest they be led from a belief in this doctrine into a belief that, as taught by the scientists of the present day, dew and rain fall simply from the atmosphere, which cannot be opened and closed at pleasure, and that they are supplied from water drawn up from the earth in the form of vapor, and not from vast reservoirs, placed at the time of an imaginary creation, on the upper surface of an imaginary heaven. Remember that scientists are all Infidels and that they all go to hell.

In former lectures, I have shown that the word firmament, which, you know, is simply another name for heaven, in merely an Anglicized form of the Latin *firmamentum*, which means a solid structure used as a foundation or support, as something to render firm or stable whatever was placed upon it. As used in the Bible, this Anglicized form of the word everywhere still retains its original signification; everywhere still involves the ideas of substance and solidity. The firmament or heaven of the Bible had, of necessity, to be a wonderfully substantial structure to support the almost inconceivably vast weight of the immense oceans of water that were placed upon it, and of the sun, the moon, and the stars that were set like nails into it. Besides these immense burdens, which, from the beginning, were placed upon the firmament or Heaven, it was afterwards made to bear also the additional weight of God himself, of his throne, of his mighty city, the New Jerusalem, and of all his innumerable multitudes of beasts, of saints, and of angels. These latter facts we learn from the following, and from many other similar passages: "And they saw the God of Israel [every nation had a god or gods of its own]; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire-stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness" (Ex. xxiv, 10).

“And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire-stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it” (Ezek. i, 26). “After this I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven: . . . And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. . . . And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels [What were they?] round about the throne, and the beasts [What kind of beasts were they, and how came they to be in heaven? Do all beasts go to heaven?], and the elders [Who were they?]: and the number of them [of the beasts, of course, since so many elders had certainly as yet never reached heaven] was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. . . . And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. . . . After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number [Why not?], of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne. . . . And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain [What mountain was it?], and showed me [it seems that they had to get nearer to Heaven in order the better to see these things] that great city [It was a whopper, as we shall yet see], the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God [they must have had it suspended by a very strong cable]. And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed [How long did it take him?], twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof an hundred and forty and four cubits. . . . And the building of the wall of it was of Jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass” [a precious city, and a strange kind of gold!] (Rev. ix, 1, 2; v, 11; vii, 4, 9; xxi, 10-18).

The scene, described in the first of these passages, is said to have been beheld by several persons from the top of Mount Sinai. In this elevated position, those persons were so near Heaven that, with their natural eyes, they could distinctly see the various objects which it contained. All the other scenes described—except the descending of the New Jerusalem out of Heaven—are said to have been beheld, some by Ezekiel and the others by John, from low ground. In this position, they were so far from Heaven that, in order to distinctly see the objects which it contained, they had to go into a trance, and, thereby, become what we now call clairvoyants or seeing mediums.

As to “that great city, the holy Jerusalem,” it must, indeed, have been a stupendous and wonderfully beautiful structure. Being “twelve thousand furlongs” in each of its three dimensions, it must, of course, have been 1,500 miles in length, 1,500 miles in height, and 1,500 miles in breadth. It must have covered an area of ,2250,000 square miles on the upper surface of the firmament or solid blue sky on which it rested. This area was equal to that of about two-thirds of the whole United States, and about 4,000 times greater than that covered by the city of London. The cubical contents of that city must have equaled $1,500 \times 1,500 \times 1,500 = 3,375,000,000$ cubic miles. Allowing 375,000,000 cubic miles to have been occupied by streets, building materials, etc., we have 3,000,000,000 cubic miles or 441,593,856,000,000,000 cubic feet to be occupied by the inhabitants. Allowing to each inhabitant, whether a saint, an angel, or a beast, a room ten feet in each of its three dimensions, or 1,000 cubic feet of space, we find room in that city for 441,593,856,000,000,000 inhabitants. This would, indeed, be a “great multitude which no man could number,” and would require the earth a long time to produce them, if they were, to any considerable extent, composed of human beings, only a very small percentage of whom, according to all orthodox teachings, ever succeed in reaching heaven. What an

enormous city hell must be to contain nine-tenths or more of the whole human race!

And "that great city, the holy Jerusalem," streets and all, "was pure *gold*, like unto clear *glass*." How wonderfully strong, then, must the firmament or blue sky have been to sustain the inconceivably immense weight of this vast city of gold, in addition to the weight of the mighty masses of waters which were also placed upon it, and that of the sun, the moon, and the stars which, to keep them from falling down upon the earth, were set or stuck into it!

When we reflect that the Lord had once dwelt all alone, for several centuries, in a goods-box, called "the ark of the covenant," which was only about 4 feet long, 2 1-2 feet wide, and 2 1-2 feet high, we cannot help feeling somewhat astonished at the immensity and the costliness of the mansion in which we now find him residing, and the vastness and the varieties of the multitudes by which we now find him surrounded. We are also somewhat astonished to learn that this great city "had a *wall* great and high." Against what enemy was that wall designed to be a protection? Or was it designed simply to prevent God's performing beasts, saints, etc., from escaping and wandering off into space? It must have been designed for some useful purpose.

When we consider the almost inconceivable vastness and splendor of the great city in question, and the almost utter innumerability of the "great multitude . . . of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues," that inhabit its golden mansions, we cannot help feeling somewhat astonished as well as disgusted when we learn that all of its offices, honors, and emoluments are conferred upon the gold-loving, bigoted, intolerant, proslavery, polygamous Jews alone—when we learn that the twelve gates of its mighty wall are named after twelve Jews; when we learn that the twelve foundations of this same wonderful wall are named after twelve other Jews; when we learn

that the twelve principal thrones, next to that of God himself, are occupied by these same last named twelve Jews; when, in short, we learn that none but Jews have anything to do in its public affairs, or possess any rights that a Jew is bound to respect; and when we learn that even to Jewish beasts are granted far more honorable positions than are granted to any of the "great multitude which no man could number," of other nations. For my own part, I would prefer some other country.

When we consider that pearls are obtained from oysters, we cannot help feeling somewhat astonished when we learn that each one of the twelve massive gates of that wonderful wall was composed of a single pearl. What monstrous oysters they must have been that produced those wonderful pearls! Where were those oysters found, and who fished for them? Besides this, where did the builders of that city procure the many million cubic miles of „pure gold, like unto clear glass,” and of precious stones of which it and its wonderful walls were composed? Finally, what became of that wonderful city and all its costly materials, its innumerable multitude of inhabitants, etc., when ungodly science dissipated into empty space the firmament or solid sky on which it rested? Was it also reduced to the same utterly empty condition? If not, where is it now, what sustains it in space, and by what means can it now be reached? To all of these questions, it may be answered that this was a figurative and not a real city. Admitting, however, that it was a figurative and not a real city, then, of necessity, its inhabitants, saints, angels, beasts, God, and all, were figurative and not real inhabitants. Where, then, and what was the real city of which this city was a figure? Where is that real city now, how is it sustained in space, and by what means can it be reached? You cannot answer any of these questions, and if you could, you would only contradict the Bible, which certainly teaches that the "holy Jerusalem" in question was a real city.

“Specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb. . . . And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the *midst of heaven*” (Deut. iv, 10, 11). Here we have a mountain, and that not a very high one, actually reaching “unto the midst of heaven.” This is rendered still more clear by the thirty-sixth verse, which says: “Out of *heaven* he made thee to hear his *voice*, that he might instruct thee; and upon *earth* he shewed thee his *great fire*; and thou heardest his words out of the *midst of the fire*.” Here you see that the burning mountain in question so extended into heaven that, while speaking “out of *heaven*,” the Lord was also, at the same time, speaking “out of the *midst of the fire*” that “burned upon *earth*” on the summit of that mountain. Of necessity, then, heaven was still very near the earth.

“Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth” (2 Sam. xxii, 8). From this, we learn that heaven rested upon material foundations, and that the shaking and trembling of the earth caused these foundations of heaven also to move and to shake. This was all very natural. When we consider that the foundations of heaven were simply those portions of the firmament or solid sky which, like the brim or edge of a vast inverted bowl, rested upon the earth, we perceive, at once, that the shaking of the earth was bound to produce, at the same time, a similar shaking of the foundations of heaven.

“The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof” (Job xxvi, 11). Here, again, we have heaven with material foundations—with “pillars” which, in order to sustain heaven with all its immense burdens, had, of necessity, themselves to rest upon something solid and stationary like the earth. In the following passage, we have these foundations of heaven of a circular form, just as they should be, to correspond with the horizon of the present time, which is nothing more nor less than the

modern name of these same supposed foundations. "Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven" (Job xxii, 14).

"Heaven and earth shall pass away . . ." (Matt. xxiv, 25). Here, and in many other places, heaven is represented as something that is to pass away—to pass away, too, at the same time with the earth—as something that is incapable of remaining after the earth has passed away. This is all just as we should expect it to be. When we reflect that the foundations of heaven rest, like the brim of an inverted bowl, upon the flat surface of the earth, we can easily understand that heaven could no more remain in its place after the departure of the earth, than a bowl, inverted upon a table, could remain in its place after the departure of the table. Hence it is that, throughout the whole Bible; whenever the destruction of the earth is mentioned, that of heaven is also mentioned as something that must, of necessity, occur at the same time.

"And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together" (Rev. vi, 13, 14). From these passages, we learn that heaven is something into which the stars are set to keep them from falling upon the earth—something, however, from which they are capable of being shaken and made to come rattling down, like so many figs, upon the earth—something that is capable of remaining, standing all alone, after all the stars are thus shaken out of it; something, finally, that is capable of being rolled together like a scroll and taken away. In 2 Pet. iii, 10–13, we find it described as something that is capable of being burned up, or at least dissolved by heat—as something that actually has been or is to be thus disposed of at the same time with the earth—as something that is capable of being replaced by a newer and better article of the same kind.

All of these passages, and many others like them, prove, beyond all doubt, that the heaven of the Bible and of the Christian religion is nothing more nor less than the firmament or solid sky which the ancients, and even the people of comparatively modern times, believed to rest, like a vast inverted blue bowl, over the earth, which was supposed to be flat and stationary. Indeed, over half the inhabitants of the earth, including a great portion of the Christian Church, still believe in this heaven—in this form and condition of the earth. And this is the only heaven taught by the Bible, or by the Christian religion, as the abode of God, of angels, and of “the spirits of just men made perfect.” This is the only heaven, too, ever taught by the pagans, from whom the Christians derive all of their religious ideas. Indeed, until about three hundred years ago, when she lost the power to bend all things to her own will, the Church was wont to burn as infidels and heretics all who were so imprudent as to express any doubt in regard to the real existence of this heaven, or to teach any truth of science inconsistent with that assumed real existence. The priests very well knew that, if this heaven failed them, there was no room for any other, and that, consequently, their trade would be ruined. Their desperate defense of this heaven, therefore, against the attacks of science, was entirely natural.

When, however, by internal dissensions, the power of the church was partially broken—when scientists thus obtained a little respite from her deadly persecutions—they fully demonstrated, to the entire satisfaction of all intelligent persons, that no such heaven, no such firmament or solid sky, ever existed directly over a flat and stationary earth, or anywhere else. They demonstrated that what, to the unaided vision, seems to be a vast blue bowl inverted over the earth, and into which all the heavenly bodies seem to be set, is nothing more nor less than the color of the atmosphere by which we are immediately surrounded. They demonstrated that rain falls from the clouds—from

waters that rise from the earth in the form of vapor, and not, as taught in the Bible, from vast reservoirs placed at the time of creation on the upper surface of a firmament or solid sky. They demonstrated that, so far from being, as the Bible everywhere teaches that it is, a small, flat, and stationary body, supporting a solid sky or heaven, the earth is an immense globe revolving in space. They demonstrated that, so far from being, as the Bible everywhere teaches that they are, small bodies capable of being all shaken down like so many figs upon the earth, the stars are mighty worlds revolving in space, many of them being millions of times larger than the earth. They demonstrated that, so far from being, as the Bible everywhere teaches that they are, all stuck, at an equal distance from the earth, into a solid sky or firmament to keep them from falling, these stars, with inconceivable velocity, are rolling through space, at all imaginable distances from the earth and from one another. Finally, by means of all these demonstrations, they also demonstrated the heaven of the Bible—the heaven of all religions—to be a mere priestly invention, imposed upon the ignorance of the people. In the presence of intelligent people, priests no longer even attempt to locate their heaven.

As I have already said, the idea of utilizing this imaginary heaven by making it the place of abode of human beings after death was entirely an after-thought, and of purely pagan origin. At first, only a few great heroes and other distinguished personages were elevated to this heaven, and even these, upon that elevation, ceased to be human beings and became star-gods, such as Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Saturn, Mercury, etc. Afterwards, persons of less note came to be admitted into this heaven as the servants or angels of these distinguished deified personages. Finally, so many persons, in no way distinguished for excellence, were admitted, that it ceased to be any special honor to reach heaven. Any person, however worthless

he might be, could gain admittance by simply professing to believe certain doctrines concerning certain gods and their offspring, and by helping to support the armies of priests who taught those doctrines. At the present time, the terms of admission into this now utterly exploded imposition are so extremely easy that the most ignorant and worthless wretches among us can secure tickets without the least difficulty and enter at pleasure. For obvious reasons, the terms of admission have always been fixed, the tickets sold, and all the other business pertaining to heaven and involving money, transacted by the priests alone, who were the inventors and who continue to be the sole proprietors of the whole concern.

During the greater part of that portion of their history which is covered by the Old Testament, the Jews had very little idea of a future state of existence. All of their rewards and punishments were of a purely temporal character. Not having any immortal souls to provide for, they did not need to utilize their imaginary firmament—their solid sky or heaven—as a place of abode for human beings after death. Not until some time after they were carried away as captives to Babylon, did any considerable portion of them adopt the purely pagan ideas of a future state of existence, and of the peopling of heaven with human beings. Those Jews who adopted these ideas of their pagan masters were called Pharisees, and were always afterwards noted for their disgusting bigotry and their uncompromising intolerance. The rest of the Jews, who were in the majority and who were called Sadducees, never did adopt these ideas at all. They remained a great body of infidels, and were far more reasonable and tolerant than were the Pharisees. The Sadducees reasoned with Jesus. The Pharisees never deigned to do this. They met all his arguments with persecutions alone.

As to Jesus, if there really was ever any such person, he was doubtless a man of the most excellent intentions. His teachings, however, seem to have been a strange commix-

ture of the most sublime truths and the most pernicious errors. Many of his teachings were undeniably well calculated to exert a beneficial influence upon the minds and the characters of men. None of these teachings, however, were original with himself. All of them were borrowed by him from various grand moral philosophers who had preceded him. Many of his other teachings, some of which seem to have been original with himself, were simply unreasonable and impracticable creations of his own imagination. The balance were undeniably calculated to exert a very pernicious influence upon the minds and the characters of those who received them.

Among these pernicious teachings, may be reckoned all of those by which he fully indorsed the purely pagan ideas, which we have been considering, and which are now so fully exploded, that what we call the sky was an immense blue bowl inverted over the earth, and sustaining vast bodies of water, all the heavenly bodies, and innumerable hosts of gods, angels, saints, etc. By thus indorsing these erroneous ideas, which have done more than any others to retard the advancement of scientific knowledge, and which have led to innumerable and extremely bloody persecutions, he clearly proved that he was nothing more than a mere man, and that he was utterly unable to rise above the ignorance and the superstition that prevailed among the people of his nation and of his time.

Besides these erroneous ideas or doctrines, he seems to have adopted, and, through his disciples, to have transmitted to the Christian Church, nearly all the other erroneous ideas—nearly all the absurd, degrading, and pernicious superstitions that prevailed among any of the idolatrous nations with whom the Jews had, in any way, come in contact. Among other superstitions, he seems to have adopted, and to have transmitted to the church, a belief in witchcraft, sorcery, necromancy, etc. He seems also to have adopted, and to have transmitted to the church, a belief that the whole atmosphere was literally

swarming with invisible devils varying in size from that of a mite to that of a mountain—a belief that some of these devils were so large that they could, and, occasionally, did, with the utmost ease, pick up men and fly away with them, while others were so extremely small that many thousands of them could, and often did, live inside of the body of a single man, or of a single hog, and that, too, without perceptibly affecting his size, his shape, or his weight; a belief that all the diseases, and all the evil passions that prevailed among men, were produced by these devils, and that it was only by casting the devils out that these diseases and evil passions could be overcome. In short, he seems, in all things, to have rejected a belief in the natural, and to have adopted and transmitted to the church a belief in the supernatural alone.

Practically ignoring all the better doctrines taught by Jesus, his followers seem to have planted themselves firmly upon those which were calculated to produce the greatest amount of evil. And what was the result? The Dark Ages were ushered in. The light of learning was extinguished. Civil and religious liberty perished in darkness and in blood. Virtue became a mere mockery. Ignorance, superstition, hypocrisy, and debauchery prevailed. The Christian Religion was triumphant. The Church ruled supreme. A millennium—a carnival of a thousand years—was inaugurated of priestly domination, of terror, of crime, of wretchedness, and of bloodshed. Hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children, charged with witchcraft, were put to death by tortures too terrible to be mentioned; and all who dared to express any sympathy for these hapless victims, or any doubt in regard to their guilt, were treated in the same way. So it was also with the few scientists who dared to teach any truth not in harmony with the church doctrines that the earth was a flat and stationary body, the sky a solid structure or firmament, etc. These scientists being justly regarded as the most formidable of all foes to these, and to

all the rest of that monstrous system of errors called the Christian Religion, were persistently hunted down, by the priests, like so many wild beasts. They were starved or strangled in loathsome dungeons. They were torn to pieces and devoured by ravenous beasts. They were stung to death in dark dens filled with venomous slimy serpents. Their bones were broken upon the wheel. Their joints were pulled asunder upon the rack. Their tongues were torn from their throats. Their flesh was mangled with red-hot hooks of iron. Their eyes were torn from their heads and the cavities filled with melted lead. They were boiled in oil, consumed at the stake, or roasted in dry pans. They were tied down upon their backs, their bodies ripped open, and then swine made to tear out and devour their entrails before their own eyes. They were bound with their faces to the sun, their eyelids were cut off, their naked eyeballs were smeared with honey to attract flies, and there they remained until thousands of the most loathsome worms consumed their eyes and slowly ate their way into their brains. In short, during all the ages of church supremacy, the days were full of gloom, of fear, of priestly ceremonies, of agony, and of blood. The nights were hideous with the awful cries of expiring victims, and with the terrible yells of the legions of faithful followers of Jesus as they danced like demented demons around the lurid flames in which, for the glory of God and the building up of his church, they were consuming the quivering flesh of some poor witch, heretic, scientist, or infidel. And all of these things, and thousands more of a similar nature, followed as the legitimate results of the monstrously erroneous teachings of Jesus himself and of his apostles.

And these faithful followers of Jesus—these relentless persecutors—these legions of yelling, demoniacal tormentors were not, by nature, any more cruel, or any more wicked, than were other men of their own time. Neither were they abusing the Christian Religion. On the con-

trary, they were faithfully defending it. They were scrupulously carrying out in their lives its very letter and its true spirit. They were truly God-fearing and God-loving men. They had been reared up; as it were, beneath the very droppings of the Lord's sanctuary. From their earliest childhood, they had been taught by pious mothers, and by priests who claimed to be God's ministers, to regard their religion as of more importance than all other concerns put together. And they did so regard it. They were a thousand times more strict in the observance of all its ordinances—in the discharge of all the duties that it enjoined upon them—and a thousand times more zealous in its defense, than are the so-called Christians of the present time. They would have cheerfully suffered martyrdom for their religion, and that is something that very few Christians would now do. In destroying heretics, infidels, witches, scientists, etc., by the most terrible of all conceivable tortures, they were simply performing what they sincerely believed to be a solemn religious duty; a duty the performance of which would secure to them God's most precious blessings, and the neglect of which would bring upon them his most fearful displeasure. They were faithfully carrying out, in letter and in spirit, the doctrines of the Bible—the precepts of the religion that they loved. The evil lay not in the people themselves, but in the very nature of their religion. Previous to becoming Christians, they were no worse than were the other people of their own time. As its legitimate result, Christianity made them worse than they were while under the influence of paganism. Were the Christians of the present time to live as fully up to all the requirements of their religion as those people did, they would be no better than those people were. If the Christians of the present time really are, as they claim to be, any better than were the Christians of the Dark Ages, it is simply from the fact that the Christians of the present time have, in a thousand things, receded from the Bible and from primitive Christianity. It is only

as they thus recede from these fountains of evil, that Christians ever can, or ever do, become any better. So long as they cling closely to the Bible and to their religion they are bound to be unreasoning fanatics, intolerant bigots, and unfeeling tormentors. They are bound to believe in witches, and to kill them. They are bound also to destroy heretics, infidels, scientists, and all other enemies to their religion. In short, they are bound to be just what the Christians were during those dark ages in which Christianity was triumphant.

And how stands the case now? Has the Church ever admitted that any of the doctrines in question are erroneous? Has she ever abandoned any of them? We all know that she has never done either of these things. We all know that all these doctrines are clearly taught in the Bible, and that the Church has never condemned the Bible or any portion of it. We all know that she still holds the Bible to be, in its entirety, the inspired Word of God, to be in every particle absolutely true, and to be, in its letter and its spirit, to the fullest extent, binding upon the consciences of men. We all know that she has never admitted that she did wrong in killing witches, heretics, infidels, scientists, etc. We all know that, so long as she retained the power to do so, she clung to the killing of these classes of offenders as a most precious heaven-accorded privilege. We all know that she still claims a right to the exercise of this blessed privilege, and that she would certainly still exercise this right, if her power to do so still remained. We all know that, without condemning the Bible, and the God of the Bible, she cannot condemn the doctrines of witchcraft, of sorcery, of necromancy, etc. We all know that it is only under absolute compulsion that she suffers those to live who reject these God-given doctrines. We all know that she still clings to the equally pernicious, and equally exploded, doctrines of a local heaven, resting above a flat and stationary earth, and of a local hell resting under that earth. We all know that

she must retain these doctrines or perish. We are not surprised, therefore, to see her still desperately battling away against every truth of science that tends, in any way, to throw light upon these monstrous priestly impositions. We are not surprised to see her, shorn as she now is of the power to burn them in this life, impotently dooming to eternal burnings, in the life to come, every scientist who demonstrates that the heaven and the hell upon which her existence depends are simply absurd priestly inventions, borrowed from pagan mythology.

No longer intimidated, however, by the empty fulminations of the now almost powerless church, scientists have thoroughly dissipated into empty space the firmament or heaven of the Bible—the only heaven ever taught in any of the world's many systems of religion. All intelligent ministers of the gospel now very well know that the heaven of the Bible—the heaven which, for money and power, they still hypocritically teach—was essentially founded upon the ideas of a flat and stationary earth, a solid sky or firmament, etc. They now all very well know, too, that, in teaching as a reality a heaven essentially founded upon these demonstrably erroneous ideas, they are simply playing the ignoble role of unscrupulous religious impostors. They now all very well know that, in teaching this heaven, they are founding hopes which can never be realized. One of them once admitted to me that he was thus knowingly imposing upon the credulity of the people. He contended, however, that he, and all other similar impostors, were entirely justifiable in thus deceiving the people; that the people wanted to be thus deceived; that they would more cheerfully pay for being deceived than for anything else; that by this deception, this groundless hope of heaven, they were rendered happy, if not better, while they lived; that, when they died, they would know nothing about it; and that, consequently, the deception, upon the whole, increasing as it did the sum total of human happiness, was undeniably a

good thing. Letting this argument pass for what it is worth, the priests all very well know that, without utterly ruining their own trade, they cannot abandon the practice of this monstrous imposition. And can we reasonably hope that they will ever ruin their own trade?

Were the truth in regard to these things generally known, the Christian Religion would at once appear in its real character, that of a monstrous imposition. The church would at once become a thing of the past, and the trade of the priests would be gone. The people would at once recognize science as the source of all truth, and nature herself as the source of all good. Sectarian persecutions and dissensions would at once and forever cease upon earth. Men would no longer squander their money upon armies of worse than useless priests, or in the erecting and the furnishing of those gorgeous temples of pride and fashion, called churches. The people would soon all learn to think and to act for themselves. A higher state of intelligence would be inaugurated, and peace, prosperity, and happiness would prevail. It is only through their own ignorance, only through their habit of having others do their thinking and their acting for them, that the masses of the people are still capable of being made the willing victims, of those mighty armies of impostors who live by priestcraft alone.

I am aware that the charges which I am now making against the priesthood in general are very grave ones, and I expect that, in making them, I shall array against myself the unrelenting persecutions of the whole priestly fraternity. So well persuaded am I, however, of the justness of these charges, that I now explicitly repeat, without the least fear of successful contradiction, that every man who preaches, as a reality, the heaven of the Bible, or any other heaven consistent with the Christian Religion, is either to be pitied for his want of common sense, or to be abhorred for his want of common honesty. In the one case, he is incapable of distinguishing between truth

and error or between reason and absurdity. In this case, his want of intelligence renders him utterly unfit to be a teacher of the people. In the other case, although he is well qualified to be a successful minister of the gospel, he is too dishonest to be trusted in any capacity whatever. In either case, therefore, his teachings are utterly worthless, if not absolutely pernicious. In the present light of science, no one but a mental imbecile can really believe in the literal existence of any such heaven, or of any such hell, as is taught in the Bible; and no one but a consummate hypocrite and scoundrel will preach such a heaven, or such a hell, while he himself does not believe in its literal existence. Let every priest, therefore, determine for himself whether he be a mental imbecile or a hypocrite and a scoundrel. He cannot preach the doctrines in question and still be both intelligent and honest. The former of these two classes of preachers, the mental imbeciles, who themselves actually do believe the absurd doctrines in question, are usually to be found in country villages, preaching for small salaries to small and ignorant congregations. The latter class, the intelligent hypocrites and scoundrels, who do not themselves believe a word of the absurd doctrines in question, are usually to be found in large towns and cities, preaching for princely salaries to large, intelligent, and fashionable congregations. The preachers of this latter class usually get more real enjoyment out of life than do any other class of persons; and beyond this enjoyment, for what do they care?

Leaving these men, however, to reconcile their false teachings to the people, the best way they can, with their own consciences, let us go on a tour of exploration, through the universe, and see if we can discover any trace of the Christian's evanished heaven. We need not look for it any more where the Bible locates it, upon the upper surface of a solid sky or firmament, over-arching and resting with its brim or foundation upon a flat and stationary earth. We have already often looked for it

there in vain. When, with godlike power, Science rolled up the Bible's little flat and stationary earth into an immense globe, and sent it whirling, with inconceivable velocity, through the measureless regions of uncreated space; when she utterly dissipated the Bible's firmament or solid blue sky that rested like a vast inverted bowl over the earth, the heaven of the Bible, the only heaven ever invented by men, vanished, at once and forever, from among the things that were. Where, then, is it now?

If, indeed, there really be any such place as heaven, then, of necessity, it must possess a definite size and shape, it must be composed of a definite quantity of matter, and must occupy a definite portion of space. If it be not where we now are, on the earth's surface, then, of necessity, it must be either inside of the body of the earth, or somewhere above the earth's surface, in the realms of illimitable space. That it exists, either inside of the earth, or on her surface, no orthodox sect of Christians pretend to teach. We need not, therefore, look for it in either of these directions. Since all orthodox Christians agree in locating it, where its very name requires it to be, above the earth's surface, we need not look for it in any other direction. But what does *up* or *above* the *earth's surface* mean? Simply *outward* from the *earth*, indefinitely, in *all directions*. And does heaven lie thus, indefinitely, outward from the earth in all directions? If it does, then, of necessity, it must be a transparent hollow sphere of unknown but definite thickness, surrounding the earth as a center, and accompanying her in all her revolutions. On this hypothesis, we are already in the very center of heaven, and God, with all his mighty menageries of performing beasts, with all his countless hosts of saints and of angels, is riding with us around the sun. We need not, therefore, trouble ourselves any more about going to heaven. In this case, however, who takes care of all the other worlds, and what becomes of their inhabitants? Is each one of them, in like manner, accompanied by a simi-

lar heaven with a similar God, a similar menagerie, etc., of its own, inside of it?

If the lost heaven of our search does not thus surround the earth, on all sides, and partake of all her motions, where can it be, and what can it be? Of necessity, it must be either inside or outside of the solar system. We will first look for it inside of this system. In its composition, it must, of necessity, as I have already stated, contain matter in some form. To make it destitute of all matter, would evidently be to reduce it to empty space—to a perfect vacuum—to nothing at all. Indeed, the Bible has it composed of matter—of gold, precious stones, etc. Of equal necessity, too, the matter that enters into its composition must be, like all other matter, possessed of certain essential properties, among which are gravity, magnetism, etc. Possessing these properties, then, in its composition, heaven must, of necessity, attract or repel every other material body, and be, at the same time, itself attracted or repelled by every other such body. In this case, it would, sooner or later, fall to, and unite with, the sun, or some other material body, unless it were prevented from so doing by possessing, like all other known worlds, what is called orbitular or planetary motion. In other words, it must, of necessity, be itself a planet. And this it must be, no matter to what system it may belong. Our search, therefore, reduces to the task of finding some planet which has been specially fitted up for the abode of God, of saints, of angels, etc.

When, however, we come to examine the various planets that lie within our field of vision, we find that they are all similar to the earth in their composition and their character. We find that they are all subject to the vicissitudes of day and night, summer and winter, etc., and that, as places of abode, they are not so well adapted to the children of the earth as is the earth herself. Where, then, is the Christian's evanished heaven, what is it, how can it be reached, and what proof have we that there is any such

place at all? Our preachers profess to be able to guide us unerringly to this heaven. If, then, they be not all a set of consummate impostors, they certainly can, and just as certainly will, inform us exactly where it now is, what it now is, and how it can now be reached. They certainly can, and just as certainly will, remove from our minds every vestige of doubt in regard to these things. Let them do this, and I will at once recant all my infidel teachings, and become a zealous champion of the Christian Religion. If they cannot do this, then they undeniably stand before us a set of convicted impostors, and we should treat them as such. To give them any aid or encouragement in the practice of their monstrous imposition, is simply to become *particeps criminis* in all their evil doings. So much for heaven.

In regard to hell, I shall not say very much. The word is of Anglo-Saxon origin, and formerly signified nothing more than death, or the grave in which the dead were concealed or covered up. As heaven involved the idea of elevation—of something heaved up and thus made prominent to the view—so hell, on the contrary, involved the opposite idea of depression—of something like a pit, into which objects, when cast, became covered up and concealed from the view. The Hebrew word corresponding to hell is *sheol*; the Greek word, *hades*. With the meaning now assigned to it by the Christian Church, that of a place filled with fire and brimstone, in which the spirits of ungodly men are eternally tormented, the word hell is not found at all in the Old Testament. To the credit of the Jews, they never needed, and never used, any such institution as the Christian's hell.

In the New Testament, the word hell is often used, but improperly so, as the translation of the Greek word *Gehenna*, or the Hebrew *Gehinnom*, which, according to Webster, was the name of a "valley, near Jerusalem, where some of the Israelites sacrificed their children to Molech, and which, on this account, was afterwards regarded as a

place of abomination, and made a receptacle for all the refuse of the city, perpetual fires being kept up in order to prevent pestilential effluvia." The bodies of executed criminals, denied the right of burial, were also often thrown into this valley and there consumed, or partially so, by the fires that were kept constantly burning. "In the New Testament," therefore, as Webster continues, "the name (Gehenna) is transferred by an easy metaphor to hell." This valley, therefore, and not hades or the grave, is really the hell of the Christian Church; or, rather, from this valley was derived the idea which led priests to the invention of the hell which they now preach.

"For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains" (Deut. xxxii, 22). This, I believe, is the first passage of the Bible in which the word hell is used. Whatever may have been the nature of the fire in question, it is certain that the hell here mentioned, although declared to be the "lowest hell," was something of a material nature—something connected with the surface of the earth, "with her increase," her "mountains," etc.—something connected with the temporal interests of the people. It certainly was not, in any way, connected with a future state of existence. This fact is rendered still more clear by the next three verses, in which God threatens to punish his disobedient and rascally favorites with hunger, with heat, with the teeth of beasts, with the poison of serpents, with the sword, and with other similar evils, all of which undeniably pertained to earth and to the present life. And all of these evils were to be connected with, and to follow after, the evils which were to be the direct results of the setting of hell and the mountains on fire. Of necessity, then, hell, which was burned by the same fire that burned "the foundations of the mountains," must have been, like all the other things with which it was connected, of a purely temporal nature.

“The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me” (2 Sam. xxii, 6). In order to be thus “compassed . . . about” by “the sorrows of hell,” David, the reputed author of this language, must, of necessity, have been himself in the midst of the hell to which these sorrows pertained. But what was the nature of that hell? Was it, as our priests would fain have us believe that it was, an eternal world, filled with fire and brimstone, and resounding with the never-ceasing cries, of unutterable anguish, of devils and the spirits of the damned? Certainly not. Previous to his death, David was never in any such hell as this, and was never encompassed by the sorrows of any such hell. He was simply encompassed by the sorrows of the hell of persecution; the hell in which Christians have always delighted to torment infidels, heretics, scientists, and even one another. The first verse of this same chapter says: “And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul.” From this, and from other portions of the same chapter, we learn that David’s “sorrows of hell” were nothing more than the persecutions of his enemies. From some of these same passages, we also learn that, in return for these “sorrows of hell” with which they compassed him about, he gave those enemies hell itself—death and the grave.

“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell” (Ps. xvi, 10). From this, we learn that the soul of the author, the godly David, was to be, for a time, confined in hell, from which, however, God was expected finally to release it. By turning to Ps. xlix, 15, we learn exactly what this hell was. “But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me.” Here the same hope or sentiment is expressed in language that cannot be misunderstood. Unlike most of the other Jews of his time, David, who had been compelled to spend some years among the pagans of the neighboring nations, seems to

have derived from those pagans a belief in the doctrine of a future state of existence. Like many other believers in this doctrine, however, both of ancient and modern times, he believed that the soul would sleep with the body in sheol or the grave, until the coming of a day of resurrection. He believed that his own soul would go down thus with his body into the grave, but he expected it to be, in some future day, redeemed or resurrected thence and taken by God unto himself. Hence the language above quoted.

In the latter of the two passages under consideration, the word sheol or hades is correctly translated "the grave." This passage, therefore, makes good sense, and is easily understood. This is especially the case when we consider the author's belief in the doctrine of the final resurrection of souls long dormant in the grave. In the former passage, the same word sheol or hades is incorrectly translated "hell." This passage, therefore, makes the worst kind of nonsense, and has caused a vast amount of wrangling, and not a little throat-cutting, among the champions of the Bible. The sense, however, is made all right by simply translating it correctly—"For thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave." So of scores of other similar mistranslations of this same word. In every instance, the mistranslation reduces to nonsense the passage in which it occurs.

Had these mistranslations been the unintentional work of men too ignorant to make correct translations, that fact would have been sufficient to destroy all confidence in the Bible after it had passed through the hands of such men. We find the case, however, to have been much worse than this. As I have already elsewhere stated, we find that these mistranslations were the result, not of gross ignorance, but of deliberate design. We find that, when, for their own benefit, the Christian priesthood had invented and put into operation the horrible but lucrative hell to which they still so tenaciously cling, or rather, when they had stolen this soul-dwarfing but money-making institu-

tion from their pagan neighbors, they thought to make it more popular among the people, and, consequently, more profitable to themselves, by making it appear to have been in use among the Jews of ancient times. We find further that they, therefore, went back through all the Old Testament scriptures, and inserted the word hell into as many of them as possible. We find, however, that they could not thus insert into these scriptures the present popular meaning of the word hell; and that, consequently, the inevitable result of this whole extremely dishonest proceeding was simply to reduce to nonsense many of the plainest passages of the whole Bible. We find, for instance, that, in their wonderful eagerness to put a plenty of hell into the Old Testament, they even went so far as to make a hell, or, at least, a hell-of-a-fish, of the monster that is said to have performed the act of deglutition upon the person of the rebellious old prophet, Jonah. After passing through the mutilating hands of men so utterly wanting in all that constitutes common honesty, of what possible value to us can the Bible be?

“Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell” (Ps. lv, 15). In this passage, the word sheol or hades should certainly have been translated, “the grave.” Indeed, it is so translated in the margin of the accepted version, even some Christians having come to doubt the policy of making David, their model of the Bible, thus incontinently pray for the “quick” descent of all his personal enemies into the unspeakable torments of eternal flames.

You will notice that, in this passage, and, in every other passage of the Old Testament in which they are both used, the words death and hell are employed as the names of things of a kindred nature—of things naturally associated with each other, hell following directly as the legitimate result of death. This is just as it should be. In these passages, hell, being merely a mistranslation for the grave, is naturally associated with death, which renders the grave

necessary. In regard to life and hell, on the contrary, the very reverse of this is true. In every instance in which they are both mentioned, they are contrasted with each other as things of entirely opposite or dissimilar natures—as things essentially disassociated from each other. See Prov. xv, 24: “The way of *life* is *above* to the wise, that he may depart from *hell beneath*.” This, again, is just as it should be. Hell, meaning death or the grave, is, by its very nature, essentially disassociated from its opposite, life.

“And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to *hell* with their *weapons of war*; and they have laid their *swords* under their *heads*, but their iniquities shall be upon their *bones*, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living” (Ezek. xxxii, 27). Here we have, in hell, not the souls of the dead screaming in unutterable torments, but their bodies resting peacefully with their swords under their heads, and their other weapons of war by their sides. This was all natural enough. The hell in question was simply the grave in which, according to the custom of many nations, the fallen warriors were laid to rest with their weapons of warfare by their sides or under their heads. Our priests, however, would fain have us believe that the parties here mentioned were disembodied souls that had lugged their weapons of war and their own bones down to the Christian’s horrible hell, wherever that may be, and had there, of their own accord, lain themselves quietly down to rest, in puddles of melted brimstone, with these weapons by their sides or under their heads. These priests seem to forget that the heat of such a hell as they preach would soon char to dust the bones of the warriors in question, and either burn up or melt their weapons of war. In their mad efforts to sustain this their monstrous hell-fired imposition, how supremely ridiculous do these unscrupulous priests render many passages of scripture which, when properly rendered, are reasonable and even beautiful!

To me, there seems to be something exceedingly beautiful in the idea, erroneous though it doubtless is, upon which is founded the custom, still prevalent in many countries, of thus laying the fallen hero to his last repose with his weapons of war, and all the other articles that he most highly prized in this life, either by his side or under his head. On the part of those who practice it, this custom indicates a kind regard, extending beyond the mystic river of death, for the welfare and the happiness of their kindred and their friends. It also indicates on their part an abiding faith in the reality of a conscious existence beyond the grave. The pale and silent sleeper is expected to awake, some day in the indefinite future to resume an active and joyous existence, and to again use the various articles that are thus so kindly interred with his lifeless remains. Yes, there is something very beautiful in this custom—something that tends to soften and to humanize even the savages by whom it is practiced.

In their intense desire, however, to have the greater portion of mankind eternally damned, our priests have changed this beautiful, this humanizing custom, into the horrible, the demonizing custom, now almost universal throughout all Christendom, of burning by far the greater portion of all our friends, our relatives, and our neighbors, for ever and ever, with yelling fiends and screaming devils, in the fearful flames of fire and brimstone. Yes, our priests have even blasphemously represented God himself as the most atrocious of all monsters—as a monster who, without consulting their own wishes in regard to this matter, continues to bring men into existence, and then, for some trivial offense, of which, when making them, he himself predetermined that they should inevitably be guilty, to doom nine-tenths or more of them, men, women, and children—yea, infants not a span long—to writhe and shriek, with flaming eyes and burning breath, in the unutterable torments of fire and brimstone, during all the absolutely endless ages of eternity. What could be more

utterly destructive to all that is grand, noble, and beautiful in humanity, than is the harboring in one's bosom of a belief in this awful doctrine of the Christian's hell—this doctrine so unutterable in its injustice and cruelty to men, and so fearfully shocking in the monstrosity of its blasphemy against God?

The Jews had not sufficient faith in the reality of an existence beyond the grave to practice the beautiful custom to which I have called your attention. Those mentioned by Ezekiel as practicing this custom were Egyptians and other gentiles. Instead of making such graves themselves, the Jews, whenever they had opportunity, were wont, in revenge, to desecrate those made by their gentile neighbors. In the passage which I have quoted, you will notice that a threat is made against the "bones" of those thus laid to rest because of the "iniquities of those persons while they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living." This same want of faith in the immortality of the soul, on the part of the Jews, left them, as I have already said, no possible use for any such institution as the Christian's hell.

"Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them" (Amos ix, 2). From this, we learn that hell was somewhere under the ground, and that it could be reached by digging. Indeed, I believe that the advocates of this institution have always agreed in teaching that its location was somewhere down, or below the position occupied by ourselves. These teachings, therefore, certainly place it below the earth's surface; somewhere within the body of the earth. In that position, it must, of necessity, accompany the earth in all her motions, and cannot, at the very farthest, be more than the earth's semi-diameter distant from where we now are. But in what part of the earth is it, and where is its entrance? If, before his death, some enterprising Yankee could discover it, would he not turn it to account by either selling it, or working it, as a sulphur mine? And would

he not be likely to hire all the devils and damned men in hell to labor for him as miners and to take their pay in water?

“But I say unto you, That whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matt. v, 22). This is the first passage in the New Testament in which the word hell is used; and we at once perceive that the word is here used with a meaning never assigned to it in the Old Testament; a meaning more nearly akin to its present popular meaning in the Christian’s gloomy mythology. We at once perceive that, instead of being used, as it is in the Old Testament, in its literal sense, to represent the grave, it is here used in a new, and, consequently, a figurative sense, to denote either the place of confinement, or the condition of punishment that is supposed to await the departed spirits of those whom God has not seen fit to “elect” to salvation. The sense in which the word is here used being a figurative sense, the word fire, which is used in the same connection, is bound to signify figurative and not real fire. That figurative fire might have been some form of punishment that awaited the offender in another world, or it might have been nothing more than the immediate warming up which he was in danger of receiving at the hands of the brother whom he had offended by calling him a fool. At the present time, the meaning that Jesus probably meant to convey would very likely be expressed as follows: “But I say unto you, that whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of ‘*catching hell*,’ or of having a *head put on him* by the offended brother.” Admitting, however, that the fire of hell be real fire, what then? Since, according to all orthodox teachings, the souls of men are entirely immaterial, it is evidently utterly impossible for them to be, in even the slightest degree, affected by the purely physical action of a material substance like real fire. Would not such souls be just as comfortable in

such fire as they would be anywhere else? Would not hell be a failure?

“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole *body* should be cast into *hell*” (Matt. v, 29). From this, we learn that the bodies of men were sometimes cast entire into hell. It would also appear that they were occasionally cast therein while yet alive, or that they were at least prematurely killed in order that they might be cast therein. Otherwise, no man would care, to the value of his right eye or his right arm, what became of his body? But how could these things have been, if hell was then what the Christian Church teaches that it now is? We all know that live men were never taken from among their friends, and cast thus bodily into any such hell. We all know, too, that even the bodies of dead men were never cast into any such hell; that the bodies of dead men always remain and decay here upon earth. Besides this, even if the bodies of men were cast into such a hell, how long could they, whether dead or alive, survive the action of its terrible fires? As a place of continued punishment, would not such a hell be a total failure?

From all these things, it is evident that, although Jesus certainly did have reference to some place, or to some condition of punishment, he had no reference to any such place as the Christian's eternal hell, or to any such condition of punishment as is said to exist therein. It is evident that he had reference to some place, or to some condition, into which, as a punishment, the *bodies* of men were *actually* cast. But what could that place or that condition have been? Evidently nothing more nor less than Gehenna itself, the valley of Hinnom, near which he then was, and into which, as I have already said, the bodies of executed malefactors were frequently thrown. To the people of Judea, this valley, with all its horrible associations, appeared a thousand times more terrible than the

gallows appears to the people of America, or the guillotine to those of France. To restrain them from wicked ways, parents were wont to hold up to the imaginations of their children the terrors of this hideous valley. Teachers were wont to do the same with their pupils. And Jesus was simply following this common custom. He was simply teaching his hearers that, if they indulged in any form of sin, they were liable finally to commit some capital offense, to be executed, and to be thrown bodily into Gehenna or hell; that in order to be entirely secure against this fearful fate, they should promptly cast from them everything, however dear it might be to them, even a bodily member, an eye, an arm, or a sexual organ, if that thing, that bodily member tended to lead them into sin. Jesus had probably himself already acted upon this principle, and made himself a eunuch. Be this as it may, it is certain that many of the early Christians, and not a few of those of modern times, acting upon his recommendation, did make eunuchs of themselves, and did, in this way, greatly diminish their inclination to sin, and the danger of their ever being cast as executed malefactors into Gehenna or hell, or of their ever meeting any other evil fate of which Gehenna was a type.

“And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven; shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day” (Matt. xi, 23). Jesus here evidently refers to the cities themselves of Sodom and Capernaum—to the houses, the temples, the towers, etc., that constituted them cities, and not to the people who inhabited those cities. The people were not cities. People are never built. Cities always are. Besides this, the people of Capernaum were never “exalted unto heaven,” and, under no circumstances, could the people of Sodom “have remained until this day.” It was the houses, then, the temples, the towers, etc., of Capernaum which were “exalted unto heaven” and which were to “be brought down

to hell," or else it was simply the prosperity of the city which was figuratively said to be thus exalted, and which was to be figuratively thus brought down. But what was the hell down to which the material or the prosperity of this city was to be brought? Evidently nothing more nor less than that condition of lowness of material or of prosperity, that condition of ruin and desolation, to which any city may be reduced, and to which Capernaum actually was afterwards reduced. And will the champions of the Bible contend that the material of that city, the houses, the temples, the towers, etc., were ever brought down to an eternal world called hell, filled with fire and brimstone, or that the prosperity of that city was ever brought down to any such hell? If they do contend for either of these things, will they please inform us how far those various structures had to be carried in order to be literally "brought down to hell," who accomplished this wonderful work, how he accomplished it, how these various structures are preserved from destruction by the fierce fires of hell, of what use they can possibly be, where they now are, in a country whose climate is so torrid that its inhabitants require no shelter, etc., or how its condition of prosperity was separated from the city itself and "brought down to hell," and how the literal fires of hell were enabled to so act upon that abstract condition—that mere idea—as to constitute to it a real punishment? Will they also explain why that city was never missed when it went to hell? Besides all these things, are not these champions bound to admit that, in construing this matter as they do, they make God act like a silly child in thus venting his unreasonable wrath upon inanimate objects; in thus incontinently damning houses, towers, temples, etc., or conditions—purely abstract ideas—to the fierce flames of an eternal hell? From all these things, it is evident that the "hell" to which Capernaum was to "be brought down" was no more an eternal world, filled with fire and brimstone, and inhabited by devils and other damned spirits,

than the "heaven" to which, at that time, it was "exalted," was an eternal world, filled with all things glorious, and inhabited by saints, by angels, and by God himself. As the "heaven," unto which that city was "exalted," was evidently nothing more nor less than simply the height literally attained by its lofty structures, or the height figuratively attained by its wonderful prosperity, so the "hell," down to which it was to "be brought," was evidently nothing more nor less than the reverse of these conditions; nothing more nor less than the lowness to which it would literally "be brought down," when all of its lofty structures should be leveled with the ground, or the lowness, to which it would be figuratively "brought down," when all of its great prosperity should have departed. As heaven was merely literal or figurative height, so hell was merely literal or figurative lowness of condition.

"And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And in *hell* he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son," etc. (Luke xvi, 22-25). Here we do, indeed, seem at last to have found the literal hell of fire and brimstone which has always been the pride and the delight of the Christian Church. Here we do, indeed, seem at last to have found the literal home of the Christian priest's great confederate, Old Splitfoot himself—the literal home of the eternally damned. The ablest Bible critics, however, all agree that the whole scene here described is purely allegorical, never having been really enacted at all. What, then, becomes of the real hell which we seemed to have found?

The changing of this purely metaphorical hell into a real institution was the work of the Christian priesthood of a later and a more corrupt period. The change was made for the special benefit of the priests, and well has it served the purpose for which it was intended. Indeed, without this improved hell, with which to scare the people and make them pay for priestly services, half our priests would have to steal or starve. But, accepting the scene just described as a reality, how far could heaven and hell have been apart, and yet the inhabitants of the one be thus able to see and to converse with the inhabitants of the other? At the very furthest, they could not have been more than a few thousand feet apart. Since heaven, then, is on one side of us and hell on the other, we must, of necessity, be within easy speaking distance of both places.

“He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not *left in hell*” (Acts ii, 31). Here the unknown author of Acts describes some one [David] as prophetically going forward, through a vast vista of years, to a point in time posterior to the resurrection of Jesus; and as then declaring of Jesus, as of one who had already lived and died, “that his soul was not *left in hell*.” This language clearly implies that, although it was finally redeemed or resurrected therefrom, the soul of Jesus was, nevertheless, permitted to go to hell, and, for a time, to remain confined therein. But what was the nature of the hell to which the soul of this distinguished personage was thus permitted to go, and in which it was thus permitted, for a time, to remain? Dare the champions of the Bible claim that this was the Christian’s eternal hell of fire and brimstone? Dare they claim that, for a time, Jesus was actually damned—that, for a time, he was doomed to be the companion and, in his condition, the equal of furious fiends and shrieking devils? Dare they claim that, for a time, he was punished with the unspeakable torments of never-ending fires? Dare they claim that

he came forth broiled to a cinder? If not, what was the nature of that hell?

As I have already explained, the writers of the Old Testament, of whom David was one, never spoke of hell as a place of punishment; but, on the contrary, as a place of repose—as the grave or something of a similar nature. It is evident, therefore, that, in the present instance, David, who, as I have already stated, was a believer in the doctrine, still held by many, that the souls of the departed rest, for a time, in the grave with their bodies, by hell meant simply the grave in which he prophetically saw that the body of Jesus was to repose, and in which he believed that the soul of this same personage was also, for a time, to repose. In this hell, and in no other, was Jesus ever confined.

“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; . . . it setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell” (Jas. iii, 6). From this, we learn that the fire of hell and the fire of the human tongue are of exactly the same nature. Since, then, the fire of the human tongue is certainly not real fire, we know that the fire of hell cannot possibly be real fire. Indeed, without the least fear of successful contradiction, I boldly assert that there is not, in the whole Bible, a single passage which, when properly rendered with its context, justifies a belief in the doctrine of a literal local hell of fire and brimstone, such as is now commonly taught by the great body of the Christian Church. That I am entirely safe in making this bold and broad assertion, has often been fully demonstrated by that brave and intelligent sect of semi-infidel Christians, or semi-Christian infidels, commonly called Universalists.

“And I looked, and behold, a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and *Hell* followed him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Rev. vi, 8). From this, we learn that “*Death*,” as an actor or cause, was

wont to use "*death*" as an *instrument* to produce *death*, as an *effect*. But how could this have been? Could a cause have used itself as a means by which to produce itself? This must be one of the mysteries of godliness. Will the champions of the Bible please rise and explain? Letting this matter pass, however, we learn that, at the time in question, *Hell* was a *person*—a *soldier*—who lived here on earth, and whose business it was to slay men, with the "*sword*" and other instruments, and not, as our preachers would have us believe, to merely receive men, after they were dead, into his red-hot belly. Whether, like Death, Hell was mounted upon a horse or not, we are not informed. It is reasonable to assume, however, that like a common tramp, he went trudging along on foot. Being filled, as we all know that he must have been, with fierce fires, he could not have been otherwise than extremely hot—so hot that he would have severely burned the back of a horse. Being thus burned by him, the horse would have instantly thrown him off, and might have broken his neck. Had he undertaken to ride a mule, it would have kicked the *devil* out of him. Rushing along thus, filled with fire and brimstone as well as with millions of yelling devils and shrieking spirits forever damned, and armed with a formidable sword, of which he made a terrible use, he must, indeed, have been, as our preachers represent him, a *hell-of-a-fellow*.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and *hell* delivered up the dead which were in them; . . . [These last two parties, you will notice, were a couple of monstrous cannibals whose stomachs were always crammed with dead men whom they had swallowed. On this occasion, they had administered to them each a heavy dose of tartar emetic, which caused them to cast "*up* the dead which were in them." A dose of croton oil would have carried "the dead which were in them" in the wrong direction]. And death and hell [after they were done vomiting "*up* the dead which were in them"] were cast

[like a couple of dirty fellows as they were] into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx, 13, 14). From this, we learn that, like the sea, hell was merely a temporary receptacle of the dead; that its dead, like those of the sea, were to be "delivered up;" and that, afterwards, as an empty and useless article, it was to be "cast into the lake of fire." Will the champions of the Bible please inform us what this hell was?

From all that has been said upon the subject, you can now see clearly that, although the word hell was originally applied only to death or the grave, which was regarded as the greatest of all evils, it finally came to be applied, by metaphor, to whatever seemed to contain the elements of any kind of evil. Hence we find the term applied, indiscriminately, to evil habits, to war, to holes in the ground, to modes or places of punishment, to wicked men, to voracious fishes, etc. Those priests are guilty of a monstrous imposition who teach that this term is ever used in the Bible to denote, in a literal sense, a locality filled with fire and brimstone, and used as a place of eternal punishment for unbelievers and other offenders. As I have already stated, this latter form of hell was the invention of a later and a more corrupt age.

As you now all know, the term hell, as now generally used in the New Testament, is so used, by metaphor, for Gehenna or Hinnom, a valley near Jerusalem, formerly noted for the horrible rites of Molech, and afterwards used as a place in which were thrown all the refuse matter of all the city, the carcasses of dead animals, and sometimes the bodies of executed malefactors. In order to prevent the emanation of pestilential effluvia, from the vast amounts of putrid matter there collected, fires, for the consuming of this matter, were kept perpetually burning. On account, therefore, of these perpetual fires, this valley came to be frequently designated as "the place where the fire is not quenched." Notwithstanding, these fires, however, there always were, in certain portions of the valley, considerable quantities of putrid matter which

were not fully consumed. In this matter were bred immense numbers of worms, which greatly added to the horrible offensiveness of the locality, and caused it to be often designated as "the place where the worm dieth not." Sometimes these two fearfully descriptive appellations were both applied to it at once. It was then designated as "the place where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." At other times, it was designated by the terms "everlasting fire," "unquenchable fire," etc. Indeed, as a religious rite, the worshipers of Molech, while they held the country, seem to have kept sacred fires perpetually burning in that valley.

It is evident, therefore, that to be damned—to be "cast into hell," "into everlasting fire," "into the place where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," etc.—was simply to be executed as a malefactor, and to be thrown, after death, into this horrible valley, this only real hell. Naturally enough this place was regarded by the more ignorant classes of the people with a great deal of superstitious fear. Many of those people believed that, until the resurrection, the souls of the dead remained in the grave with their bodies. To the imaginations of these people, therefore, the everlasting fires, the masses of never-dying worms of hell or Gehenna, were filled with the tormented souls of those who had been damned; of those who had been condemned to die as malefactors. By thus extending the torments of the damned indefinitely beyond the present life, this idea greatly heightened the horrors of hell. It was believed, however, that, like the sea, and all other receptacles of the dead, hell would finally, in the fulness of time, give up its dead. It was believed, too, that, upon being tried or judged before the unerring tribunal of God himself, many of these inmates of hell, damned by the erring judgments of men, would be finally acquitted of guilt and transferred to the unspeakably beautiful abodes of the righteous in heaven. With this idea of hell, the idea of a day of general judgment was

entirely in harmony. With the present idea of hell, on the contrary, which has the unutterably horrible fate of the damned already unchangeably fixed for all eternity, the idea of a day of general judgment is, undeniably, an extremely absurd one.

The doctrine that, immediately after death, men are sent at once to their eternal places of abode, either in heaven or in hell, is a priestly invention of a comparatively recent date, and one which is not, even at the present time, by any means universally accepted by all the sects that profess the Christian Religion. This invention, as we have already seen, renders a day of general judgment an extremely ridiculous, if not a horribly cruel, farce. What possible good could result from the dragging of persons whose destinies have already been long since eternally and unchangeably fixed, either down from the golden mansions of heaven, or up from the fiery caverns of hell, on the pretense of trying or judging them? Among the Jews, those who were damned and cast into hell were thus disposed of by the judgment of a human tribunal which was liable to err. A re-hearing, therefore, before the tribunal of God himself, who could not err, was a necessity, and was likely often to result in a reversal of the decree of the lower court. Among the Christians, however, those who are damned and cast into hell are thus disposed of by the judgment of God himself, who, in this special judgment, is no more liable to err than he would be in a general judgment. Will the champions of the Bible, therefore, or rather the champions of this modern idea of disposing of men at death, be so kind as to inform us of what possible use the future and general judgment, which they all teach, can ever be? Can it possibly result in the reversal of any of God's former decrees? Can it possibly result in the compelling of any of the inmates of heaven to exchange the mansions of bliss which they have so long inhabited the crowns of stars which they have so long worn, the harps of gold on which they have so long played,

and the songs of praise to God which they have so long sung, for the dismal caverns of hell, the fearful flames of fire and brimstone, the horrible yells of demons, and the hideous curses of the damned? Can it possibly result in the calling up of any of the inmates of hell, all burned to cinders as they are all bound to be, from the dismal caverns and unquenchable fires in which they have so long writhed, in which they have so long vented their fruitless cries and their hideous curses, and the transferring of them to the beautiful mansions, to all the "joys unspeakable and full of glory" of heaven? If not, if no such changes are to be made, what is to be accomplished by the general judgment which is clearly taught in the Bible?

Regarding hell or Gehenna, as they did, with a great deal of just as well as of superstitious fear, the Jews, as I have already stated, were wont to restrain their children and others from evil courses by holding up before their imaginations highly colored pictures of its real or its assumed horrors, and in warning them that any wicked act on their part exposed them to imminent danger of being doomed to suffer all those horrors. Jesus, who was in all respects a Jew, who confined all his teachings to the Jews, and who appealed to all the opinions, prejudices, and superstitions of the Jews, declared that even so slight an offense as that of calling one's brother a fool subjected the offender to the "danger of hell-fire." And this declaration was true, too, with reference to the real hell-fire of Gehenna; for such an insult was liable to lead to a quarrel, to murder, to condemnation—called damnation in the Bible—to execution, and to the fires of Gehenna. But who is prepared to contend that the trivial offense of calling one's brother a fool, especially if he is a fool, subjects the offender to any great danger of the eternal and unspeakably horrible hell-fire of the Christian's gloomy mythology? As we now sometimes say of a bad man that he is on the road that leads to the penitentiary, or to the gallows, so the Jews were wont to say of a similar offender

that he was on the road that led to hell. "By an easy metaphor," therefore, as Webster says, Gehenna or hell, under the various appellations by which it was known, came to be used as the type of that unhappy condition which was supposed to await unbelievers, heretics, scientists, and other offenders after crossing the mystic river of death.

There are also two other similar expressions, found in the New Testament, and used, in the same way, to denote this same supposed unhappy condition of the ungodly after death. These two expressions, which, I believe, are confined to the single book of Revelations, and which both evidently refer to the same thing are "The bottomless pit" and "The lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." These two expressions, unlike the others which we have been considering, were not derived from Gehenna, or from anything else pertaining specially to the Jews. On the contrary, they were derived from objects which were not to be found in Judea, and were used only by a man who, though a Jew by birth, spent many years of his life outside of Judea, and who, while writing the book in which these two expressions are found, was living in a country in which were known the objects, just as natural and just as local as was Gehenna itself, from which these expressions were derived. But what were those objects? All who have ever gazed down into the crater of Vesuvius, or of any other active volcano have beheld one of those objects; have beheld "the bottomless pit," "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." Far down in the frightful depths of these volcanoes, amid the flames of fire and brimstone that glow there forever, the popular superstition of the country, in which John was when he wrote "Revelations," located the abodes of the devils and of the damned. Taking advantage of this superstition, our priests have converted this natural object—the crater of a volcano—into a world of "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

In inventing or borrowing this hell, and in putting it to the use that they have, our priests have made God the most hideous of all monsters; a monster who, for the most trivial offences which he himself causes them to commit, torments his own poor children forever and ever in flames of fire and brimstone; a monster who thus torments these his own poor children, not for their reformation, which he renders utterly impossible, but for the sole purpose of gratifying his own fiendish love of cruelty and of revenge. What could be more horribly blasphemous than is this doctrine? If a good being were to punish his own children at all, he would do so in a reasonable way and for their ultimate good, and not thus, beyond all reason and for their inevitable and eternal ruin.

And now you know all that there is to know both of heaven and of hell. You now know that the whole matter is a monstrous imposition gotten up by the priesthood as a means of keeping the people in subjection to themselves, and of making money without honest labor. You now know that, when they have made you fully believe in the actual existence of an awful hell, on the one side, which, without their aid, you cannot avoid, and in the actual existence of a glorious heaven, on the other, which, without their aid, you cannot attain, these priests have made you their willing slave. You now know that, when thus bound to them by the strongest of all mental chains—hope and fear—you will tamely do their bidding, and serve them with your time and your money. You now know that they will never appeal to your reason, your knowledge of science, or your common sense; that they will, on the contrary, always appeal to your blind faith, your passions, your sympathies, your prejudices, your hopes of heaven, your fears of hell, etc., and that they will control you, for their own interests, with their powerful but misused magnetism. You also now know, too, that they do not know a particle more about heaven and hell than you know yourselves, and that the more intelli-

gent of them do not believe in the literal existence of any such places. You now know, further, that as shepherds, they are feeding their sheep on this stuff simply because the sheep like it, and because it makes the sheep produce the finest yield of wool and of mutton. You now know, finally, that these shepherds—the more intelligent ones of them at least—never themselves swallow a morsel of the stuff on which they feed their sheep. Knowing all of these things, therefore, as you now know them, will you continue to be sheep, to swallow down, without thought or examination, whatever your shepherds see fit to give you; will you continue to yield wool and mutton for their special benefit; or will you become men and do your own thinking, choose your own food, and labor for your own benefit?

LECTURE SEVENTEENTH.

THE SABBATH OF THE BIBLE.

OF all the impositions that have ever been put upon the world by priestcraft, no one, perhaps, has been more burdensome to the people, or more lucrative to the priests, than has that which is known as the Sabbath, the Lord's Day, etc. Of course, I refer to the religious institution of that name, and not to the natural day with which that institution is connected. Like every other day, the natural day in question is all right in itself.

In thus attacking, as a priestly imposition, the institution called the sabbath, I am doubtless arraying against myself one of the strongest prejudices that ever prevailed among the professors of the Christian Religion. And yet I make the attack deliberately, well knowing to what I expose myself. So far from being deterred by the strength of the opposition which I expect to provoke, I am rather incited thereby to proceed. A pernicious institution that is very weak may be safely left to fall of itself. Not so, however, with one, like the sabbath, that is strong. Such an institution can be overthrown only by a great effort; and the fewer there are to make that effort, the more incumbent it is upon each one of them to do his entire duty.

Believing, therefore, as I do, that the institution in question is a pernicious remnant of a whole system of priestly frauds, perpetrated long ago upon an ignorant and superstitious people, I would attack it though it were defended by every other man in the entire world. While my

whole soul yearns for the sympathy and the approbation of my fellow-men, I cannot purchase even these great boons, at the cost of my conscience and my manhood, by withholding my opposition to that which I believe to be a pernicious priestly fraud.

“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his works which God created and made” (Gen. ii, 3). This is the first mention, made in the Bible, of the Sabbath, and here it is not mentioned by name. In Ex. xx, 11, however, this passage is substantially repeated, and here the seventh day—the day that had been blessed and sanctified—is called the sabbath-day. “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.”

In these two passages, we are twice assured that “the Lord *blessed* the *sabbath-day* [the seventh day] and *hallowed* [or sanctified] it.” But, in what did that blessing and that hallowing or sanctifying consist? And in what respect did the *blessing* differ from the *hallowing* or *sanctifying*? Was that day ever made to differ, in any respect, in itself, from the other days: Did it ever contain any more hours than did any other day? Did the sun ever shine more brightly, the rains ever fall more graciously, the flowers ever bloom more abundantly, or the birds ever sing more sweetly on that day than on any other? Was that day ever any freer than any other day from storms, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and other natural evils? And were men’s passions ever any more calm, or their virtues any more active, on that day than on any other?

Since the act of *sanctifying* or *hallowing* the seventh day or sabbath was performed in *addition* to the act of *blessing* it, and subsequent to this latter act, the two acts must have been entirely different in their natures. Indeed, the words *bless* and *sanctify* are never used to express the same meaning. To *bless* means to *render* more *happy*, more

prosperous, more excellent, etc. A *blessing* affects the *condition*, the *quality*, etc., of the *thing blessed*, and of that alone. To *sanctify* or *hallow* means to render *sacred*, or to set aside for a *holy use*. A sanctifying or hallowing affects only the *use* to which the thing sanctified or hallowed is to be applied, not the *character* or the *condition* of that thing. A man or a thing may be *sanctified* and yet be no *better* than any other man, or any other thing of the same kind.

From all these things, it is evident that the blessing, whatever it may have been, that was conferred upon the day in question, must have affected the *day itself*, and must have been entirely independent of the act of sanctifying that day or setting it aside for a holy use. The blessing of that day must have consisted, not in any use or observance on the part of men to which that day was sanctified, but in some specific modification of the character and condition of the *day itself*, by which it was rendered intrinsically *different* from the *other* days and *better* than they were. This blessing—this superior intrinsic excellence of the seventh day—evidently must have existed just the same before that it did after this day was sanctified or set aside as a day of religious rest. Indeed, it seems to have been because of the superior intrinsic excellence of this day—the excellence derived from the blessing in question—that it was afterwards sanctified or set aside as a day of sacred rest for the Jews, God's peculiar people.

Since the blessing in question attached to the seventh day, at the time of the creation, it must have rendered that day, in some way, better by nature or creation than other days; and, since the essential nature of a thing is never changed, that day must still be intrinsically better than other days. Will the champions of the Bible, therefore, be so kind as to inform us in what that superior intrinsic excellence consisted; and when, if at all, the day in question ceased to be thus, in itself, intrinsically superior to other days? If this day, which we call Saturday, does not now, and never did, in any material respect, differ from

other days, then, in this matter, we have proof positive that, when applied to inanimate objects, God's blessings are mere nullities worth no more than would be similar blessings or mummeries of empty words pronounced by myself upon similar objects. What proof, then, have we that, when applied to people, his blessings, in any way, affect either the character or the condition of those upon whom they are conferred? So of his curses and damnations. What proof have we that either the character or the condition of a damned man differs, in any respect, from that of a man who is not damned?

Of necessity, God's blessings either do, or do not, in some way, materially affect the objects upon which they are conferred. If they do thus affect those objects, then the champions of the Bible surely ought to be able to show in what respect the seventh day or Saturday—the sabbath of the Bible—was affected by the blessing conferred upon it. If, on the other hand, those blessings do not, in any way, affect the objects upon which they are conferred—if they are mere meaningless mummeries, then they are certainly not what they profess to be. In this case, they are simply base impositions, and God is made to stand before us in the unenviable character of one convicted of base imposture.

The champions of the Bible are bound either to admit that God's pretended blessings are thus all mere meaningless mummeries—all mere impositions of the basest kind, and that God himself is thus a base and convicted impostor, or to claim that the blessing which he conferred upon the seventh day did, in some way, intrinsically affect that day. If they take the former horn of this dilemma, they become bold infidels, like myself, and I have no further quarrel with them. If they take the latter horn, they are bound to show some intrinsic characteristic—some peculiar excellence—in which Saturday excels every other day. If they take this latter horn—if they actually do succeed in showing that, in itself, Saturday actually is,

in some way, superior to other days—then they are bound to reject, as a base imposition, the sabbath or Sunday of the Christian Church, and to return to the observance of Saturday—of the sabbath of the Bible—upon which alone the blessing, the peculiar intrinsic superiority in question, was ever conferred. In any conceivable view of the case, the Christian Sabbath is hopelessly condemned.

As I have already said, to admit that the blessing which God conferred upon the seventh day did not, in any way, intrinsically affect that day—to admit that that blessing was a mere meaningless mummary—would be virtually to charge God with being a base impostor. No champion of the Bible, therefore, I presume, will ever venture to make any such admission. But who, without having been told that the day in question had been blessed—had been, in some way, rendered intrinsically superior to other days—would ever have suspected that such was the fact? Did the people, during the first 2,500 years of the world's history ever discover any difference between that day and any other? And can we now discover any such difference? If not, what proof have we that any such difference ever existed at all? As I have already said, the blessing in question could not have consisted in anything that was done, or in anything that was required to be done, by men on the day upon which the blessing was conferred. If the Bible be any authority upon the subject, the blessing was conferred some 2,500 years before the day in question was observed as a day of rest by men—some 2,500 years, in fact, before men were even informed that such a blessing had ever been conferred upon that day or that it had ever been hallowed or set aside as a day of rest. So far from itself constituting the blessing in question, the observance of the seventh day as a day of rest was, on the contrary, founded upon the assumed fact that that day had been previously blessed and thus rendered, in some unexplainable way, better than any other day.

From all these things, it is evident that the institution

called the sabbath—the observance of the seventh day or Saturday as a day of sacred rest—was founded upon an imposition—upon the assumption of a blessing that never did exist, in connection with the day in question, outside of the fertile imagination of the impostor who originated the imposition. That this view is correct becomes still more apparent when we come to consider the reason assigned for God's blessing and hallowing this particular day. That reason is that, being *wearied* with his six days of creative labor, God “*rested* on the seventh day and was *refreshed*.” This reason involves the now utterly exploded doctrine that the entire universe was literally created, all out of nothing, in six literal days of twenty-four hours each, by mechanical means—by the *manual labor* of God *himself*. It also involves the absurd and blasphemous doctrine that, like a man, God is capable of becoming *physically wearied* with *physical labor*, and of needing, like a man, *physical rest* and *refreshment*. These two doctrines undeniably make God a finite—a physical or corporeal being totally incapable of either creating or sustaining the infinite universe. It is now a well known fact that anything which is subject to the purely physical vicissitudes or conditions of weariness and of rest and refreshment, is capable of being worn out and destroyed by simply increasing the labor that produces the weariness, and withholding the consequently more necessary rest and refreshment. This is a self-evident fact, and hence requires no proof. No intelligent person will dispute it.

If, then, the reason assigned for the blessing and the hallowing of the seventh day be a true one—if God actually did, all out of nothing, by physical or manual labor, create the entire universe, in six literal days—if he actually did make the earth flat and stationary, the sky solid, etc., and actually did, to keep them from falling, set the sun, the moon, and the stars, like so many nails, into the under surface of this solid sky, and if with this purely physical labor, he actually did become physically so weary

that he had to rest physically a whole day in order to become physically refreshed, then, in this matter, we undeniably have proof positive that God is capable of being utterly destroyed by overwork and want of rest. Whether, therefore, the reason in question be a true one or not, it certainly leaves the champions of the Bible in a very unpleasant dilemma. If they admit that the reason is a false one, then they are bound to admit also that the sabbath is founded upon an imposition, and that, consequently, it is itself an imposition. If they make these admissions, they abandon the whole controversy, and leave me nothing more to say. If, on the other hand, they contend that the reason is a true one—that God actually did perform all the purely physical labors mentioned, that he actually did become physically exhausted with these labors, and that by resting a whole day—by letting the new universe run itself for twenty-four hours—he actually did become physically refreshed, then they are bound to admit that he is capable of being worn out and destroyed. Which horn of this unpleasant dilemma will they choose?

Besides all this, what is there so remarkably excellent in rest or idleness that the first day on which, after the creation, anyone was ever idle, should have been thus blessed and honored above all other days? Would not idleness have prevailed to a sufficient extent among men without having had this premium placed upon it? Would it not have been better to encourage labor by placing a premium upon it? Of necessity, God's work was either complete or incomplete at the end of the sixth day. If it was complete, then he could not have done otherwise than rest. In this case, his cessation from labor being compulsory—being enforced by the very condition of things—could not possibly have involved any merit on his part. Why, then, should he have established a perpetual institution, the sabbath, to honor and commemorate an act involving no merit? If, on the other hand, his work was incomplete, then, in ceasing to labor when he did, in neg-

lecting ever to complete that work, he was undeniably guilty of a demeritorious act. And should such an act have been commemorated and held up for the imitation of men by such an institution as the sabbath?

I am aware that many of the champions of the Bible teach that the institution of the sabbath, and the division thereby of all time into weeks of seven days each, was intended, not only to commemorate God's unmeritorious act of cessation from labor, but also to record, as it were, the fact of a special creation and the time occupied in the accomplishment of that creation. And the Bible seems to justify this teaching. But what if it does? In preceding lectures, I have fully proved that no such special creation was ever performed in six days, or in any other period. If, then, the sabbath, and, consequently, the week, were instituted to commemorate any such creation, or to commemorate God's rest at the close of any such creation, then they were certainly instituted for the express purpose of commemorating a base and pernicious priestly fabrication.

Besides this, the Bible's pretended history of that creation represents God as resting and being refreshed on the seventh day in question, in a manner peculiar to that day alone; in a manner never indulged in by him either before that day or after it. But in what could that peculiar rest and refreshment have consisted? So far as we know, and, indeed, so far as we can conceive, God never had but two kinds of labor to perform. The one of these was the labor of *creating* the universe, and the other, the labor of *sustaining* it. If, then, the rest in question ever occurred at all, it must, of necessity, have consisted in a cessation from the one or the other of these two kinds of labor. If, however, it consisted in a cessation, or, rather, in an abstaining from the temporary work of creation, then there was nothing at all in it peculiar to the particular day in question. With the exception of the six days during which he had been engaged in the work of creation,

God had spent the entire eternity of his existence in that very kind of rest or abstinence ; and, after the close of those six days, he simply returned to this same state of eternal rest or inaction, and has continued in it ever since. That rest or abstinence, then, not having been confined to the seventh day, was not, in any way, peculiar to that day. This rest from creative labor, therefore, cannot be the form of rest in which God then indulged, although the Bible clearly intimates that it is. The rest in which he then indulged was confined to the *first seventh day* of the world's existence, and to *that day alone*. That rest ceased as soon as God had become thereby fully refreshed. That rest, too, was specially intended to afford the weary Creator the refreshment of which he then, and then only, stood in need. But God's rest or abstinence from the work of creation did not thus cease at the close of the seventh day in question. That rest continues yet unbroken ; and is not designed to afford God needed refreshment, as was the one day's peculiar rest in question.

But from what labor, except that of *creation*, could God have rested during one whole day and no longer ? Could he have thus rested from the labor of *sustaining* the universe in all of its wonderful beauty and harmony, and in all of its infinitude of motions ? As yet, no planet of the entire universe had more than started upon its course. As yet its orbit and its rate of motion were untried and unknown. Had God, then, rested a whole day from sustaining and governing it, his newly-made universe would have been so completely wrecked that he would have had to make another. In what, then, did the peculiar rest of that one day consist ? And in what respect did God's condition after he was *rested* and *refreshed* differ from his condition before he had received the benefit of that rest and refreshment ? Does his condition, like that of a man or a horse, differ at different times and under different circumstances ? If it does, may it not sometimes become, like that of a man or a horse, a fatally bad condition ? May he not, like

a man or a horse, finally perish? And, if he does thus change in his condition, why do the champions of the Bible all teach that he is, in all respects, utterly unchangeable? If, on the other hand, his condition never does and never did change, then is not the story of his change, on the day in question, from a condition of *weariness* to one of *refreshment*, bound to be utterly false? And is not the Sabbath founded upon this utterly false story? Which horn of this dilemma will the champions of the Bible take?

Another proof that the sabbath of the Bible was invented by wicked and designing men, and not instituted by an infinitely wise and merciful God, is found in the fact that the Bible everywhere makes the performing of any common labor upon that day a greater crime, and one to be more fearfully punished, than it makes lying, stealing, murder, or any other wicked act, when committed on any other day. To claim, as the Bible and its champions do, that, simply because, after only six days of labor, he had returned, on the day in question, to his eternal normal condition of idleness, God himself made such a distinction in favor of that day is simply to be guilty of the blasphemy of charging him with being a very unreasonable being. Indeed, to claim, as the Bible and its champions do, that God himself believed that he had actually created the entire universe—a little flat and stationary earth overarched by a solid sky or firmament in which, to keep them from falling, the sun, the moon, and the stars were set, in six literal days; that he believed that he had actually been exhausted by the purely physical labor of this creation, and that, on the seventh day, he had actually rested and been refreshed; to claim, I repeat, that God himself ever believed all this priestly nonsense, is to be guilty of the blasphemy of charging him with being a —— fool. And to claim, as the Bible and its champions do, that by the most cruel of all known punishments, he enforced the observance of an institution founded thus upon his own

gross ignorance, upon a base priestly invention, is to be guilty of the additional, and the still more shocking, blasphemy of charging him with being an extremely atrocious monster.

For even gathering a few sticks on the sabbath, with which to kindle a fire for the comfort of his little ones in very cold weather, a poor man, who could not otherwise protect his children from cold, had to be beaten to death with stones. "Six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath-day he shall surely be put so death" (Ex. xxxi, 15). "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath-day" (Ex. xxxv, 3). "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath-day. . . . And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation [including his nearest and dearest friends and relatives] shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses" (Num. xv, 32-36).

Dare the champions of the Bible commit the horrible blasphemy of charging God with having been, as the Bible here declares that he was, the author of these monstrous laws? Dare they also commit the additional blasphemy of charging him with having had thousands of poor men, like the one above mentioned, cruelly murdered for such offenses as trying to keep their little ones warm on the sabbath, and with then having abandoned, as we all know that he has, all attempts to enforce the observance of that day? Has the reason assigned for keeping the seventh day holy ever changed? Have God's opinions in regard to that day and the manner of its observance ever changed? If not, if none of these changes have ever occurred, why is it that God, who is represented by his worshipers as a just and impartial being, does not now

have men stoned to death, as he formerly did, for laboring upon the sabbath-day?

To me it seems far more likely that laws so atrocious should originate in hell than in heaven, and far more likely that they should originate among the priests on earth than in either of the other places. Atrocious, too, as these laws were in their general principles, they were rendered far more atrocious by the unjust discrimination that was always made in their application. Their burdens fell almost entirely upon the poor alone. Upon the priests, no portion of their burdens fell at all. As we elsewhere learn, these worthies, who filled all the offices, were permitted, or rather permitted themselves, to go right on performing their ordinary work, the offering of sacrifices, the cooking and eating of rich viands, etc., on the sabbath, the same as on any other day. Indeed, like our priests with their Sunday, those priests derived far greater profits from their trade on the sabbath than on any other day. In this fact, therefore, we have strong presumptive evidence that the institution called the sabbath was invented by the priests themselves for their own special benefit.

Upon the rich, the burdens of this monstrous institution fell very lightly. The incomes of the rich being derived almost entirely from the products of their farms, the increase of their flocks, the rents of their lands, the interest of their money, etc., and not from their own manual labor, were not materially diminished by the observance of the sabbath day. Their grain kept right on growing, their flocks increasing, their rents and interest accruing, etc., the same on the sabbath as on any other day. Giving attention to their flocks and their other property was about all that these men did on any day, and this they were permitted to do all the same on the sabbath. To the rich, therefore, the observance of the sabbath was more in name than in reality, and involved few burdens or inconveniences of any kind.

Besides this, the rich, being well clothed and fed, and living in comfortable houses, did not need to gather sticks, on the sabbath, or to perform any other servile or common labor, which was the kind of labor specially discriminated against by the sabbatical laws. "In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath . . . Ye shall do no servile work therein" (Lev. xxiii, 24, 25). With the poor, however, it was quite otherwise. Their time being their only source of support for themselves and their families, they found it very hard indeed to be robbed of one-seventh of that time, for the benefit of an army of pampered priests, and for the commemoration of God's pretended return, after only six days of labor, to the condition of perfect idleness in which he had spent all the balance of the eternal past. The poor man, for instance, who was compelled to work six days of the week away from home, for a rich creditor, or for bread—who had no means with which to buy fuel, and no time during these six days to gather any—found it very hard indeed to be debarred from the poor privilege of gathering a few sticks, on the only remaining day, with which to kindle a fire for his poorly fed and half-naked little ones who were almost perishing of cold. And yet, as we have already seen, if, under such circumstances, he did gather a few sticks on the sabbath, he was cruelly stoned to death, "as the Lord commanded Moses." A rich man could care for his cattle on the sabbath, but a poor man could not care for his children. From time immemorial it has been a maxim among the despots of the world, that, in order to be kept tame and submissive, the great toiling masses of the people—those who produce all the wealth—must be kept perpetually poor, perpetually dependent upon the priests, the land owners, the money-lenders, and others, who, while they produce none of the wealth of a country, enjoy it all. And the sabbath seems to have been instituted for the express purpose of keeping the great toiling masses thus perpetually poor—thus perpetually dependent upon the cunning;

and the fortunate few, the priests and other privileged classes—who, without labor, manage to enjoy all the fruits that labor brings. In view of the oppressions of this institution, and of others with which it was connected, we cease to wonder that the masses of the Jewish people always seemed to prefer the worship of any god, who imposed no such burdens upon his people, to that of the God who was said to be the author of this and of so many other monstrously oppressive institutions.

Besides all these things, the sabbath of the Bible was confined to the Jewish nation alone. No other people were ever required, or ever expected, to observe it; and we, of the present time, are under no more obligation to observe it, or any other day or institution in its stead, than we are to observe circumcision, the passover, the feast of tabernacles, the offering of sacrifices, the going in unto our widowed sisters-in-law to raise up seed to our deceased brothers, or any other purely Jewish rite, custom, or ceremony. Indeed, had any other people concluded to observe the sabbath, their doing so would have thwarted the very design for which it was ostensibly instituted. These facts, I will now proceed to prove.

As I have already stated, God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it at the close of the work of creation. He did not, however, at that time, nor for 2,500 years afterwards, require men to observe that day as a day of rest. By the acts of blessing and hallowing it, he affected the day itself alone, just as a man affects the land itself alone when he plows and harrows it. The reason for thus blessing and hallowing the day in question existed with God alone. Men had nothing to do with that reason—nothing to do with God's being weary, or with his resting and being refreshed—and, consequently, nothing to do with the blessing and the hallowing of the day on which this rest and refreshment were enjoyed. Indeed, at the time of which we are speaking, there was but one man in existence, and he, having been made of fresh mud late on the preceding

evening, could hardly have been as yet sufficiently dried and toughened to take any active part in God's affairs. At any rate, having as yet never seen a full day, and having never as yet either labored or rested, that mud man could not possibly have had any idea either of six days of labor or of one day of rest. Besides this, not having as yet fallen, he was not as yet condemned to labor at all; and, had he never fallen, all days would evidently have been to him exactly alike—all of them equally free from enforced labor or enforced rest. It is certain, therefore, that the blessing and the hallowing in question were perfect in themselves—were perfect before men had anything to do with the day upon which they were conferred, and that they would have remained thus perfect, had men never existed—never observed that day at all. Men, too, would have existed all the same, and would have been just as happy and prosperous as they have been, had the day in question never been blessed and hallowed at all. Indeed, although this day was thus blessed and hallowed at the close of the work of creation, men do not seem to have known anything about the matter until they were informed of it by Moses some 2,500 years afterwards. How Moses came to know anything about this matter we are not informed; nor are we informed why it is that, even yet, we are totally unable to discover any peculiar excellence in the day upon which these special marks of God's favor were conferred.

Be all these things as they may, however, it is certain that the reason assigned in the Bible for the observance of this day, or of any other, by men, as a day of rest, did not exist till the time of Moses, and that it then extended to the Hebrews alone. It would be the height of absurdity, therefore, to assume, as some have, that, for over 2,500 years, the people had been observing this day without ever having been required to do so, and without ever having known any reason why they should do so. But what was the reason on account of which the Hebrews, and they

alone, were required to observe this day? It was simply the fact that they, and they alone, had been miraculously delivered from bondage in Egypt. This was a very different reason from that assigned for the blessing and the hallowing of this same day some 2,500 years before. As I have already shown, therefore, this blessing and this hallowing, having been made perfect in themselves so vast a number of years before, could not, in any way, have depended upon, or have been, in any way, connected with either the observance by men of the day upon which they had been conferred, or the reason for that observance. As I have likewise already shown, men had nothing at all to do either with the acts of blessing and of hallowing this day, or with the reason that led God to perform those acts. So in regard to the observance of this day by him. None but the Hebrews had anything to do, either with that observance, or with the reason upon which that observance was founded. All of this I will now prove.

As to what God's reasons were for selecting the seventh day, as the one to be observed by his chosen people, I do not certainly know. Indeed, so far as my subject is concerned, those reasons do not make a particle of difference. He had a right to select any day he saw fit. It was very natural, however, that he should select that day upon which, for reasons entirely his own, he had long before conferred some kind of blessing. In speaking of what God did, I wish, of course, to be understood as meaning simply the acts of the priests, who, as I truly believe, invented both God and the sabbath, and who, for their own special benefit, fabricated the whole story under consideration.

“Six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath [or rest day] of the *Lord thy God* [but not as yet the sabbath or rest day of *men*]; in it thou shalt not do any work, . . . [And why not work now on that day as well as in the past? Because] thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and [because] the

Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm [and because]: *therefore* [that is, on account of this wonderful deliverance] the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day" (Deut. v, 13-15). Here we have clearly stated the reason, and the only reason ever given in the Bible, why the Hebrews were required to observe the sabbath or rest day of the *Lord* as a sabbath or rest day for *themselves*. From these same passages, we also learn why it was that none but the Hebrews were ever required to keep this day, and why it was that even the Hebrews were never required to keep it until after their departure out of Egypt. We learn that the reason for observing the day never applied to any other people at all, and that it did not apply even to the Hebrews until after their departure from Egypt.

From all this, it is clear that, among the Jews, the observance of the sabbath, like that of the passover, the feast of tabernacles, etc., had a definite and appropriate signification. The object of that observance was certainly not, as many of the champions of the Bible would now have us believe that it was, to commemorate God's return, after being wearied if not disgusted with only six days of labor, to his normal condition of utter and eternal idleness. Of this matter, the Hebrew people knew nothing at all until they were told of it by Moses; who probably knew as little about it as did they themselves. And, when informed of it by Moses, this was a matter in which they, a people who cared very little for either scientific or historical knowledge, could have felt very little interest. To such a people, it could have made very little difference whether God had, or had not, been weary some 2,500 years before—whether he had, or had not, rested and been refreshed on a particular day—whether he had, or had not, on account of that rest and refreshment, pretended to bless and hallow that day by muttering over it certain words, which there were none to hear or to record, and which had

not the slightest effect upon the day itself, or upon anything, or anybody else. To these people, the story of these strange events must have appeared like the mere fable which we now know that it actually was. This fabulous return of God, after so brief a period of labor, to eternal idleness, having never before been commemorated, or even heard of by men, the Hebrews, burdened as they then were with a multitude of cares, labors, and dangers, could hardly have been induced to begin its commemoration at so late a date as that of the time of Moses, and upon so slight evidence as his utterly unsupported assumption of such a return. In regard to their release from bondage, however, the people were all, in the highest degree, interested. This release was a very recent and a truly wonderful occurrence, and they could be easily made to believe that, in order to keep themselves and their posterity in perpetual and grateful remembrance of this deliverance at his hands, God would require them to observe a certain day in a certain manner, in commemoration of that deliverance. They could easily be made willing, too, to observe such a day for such a reason, so long at least as the memory of their deliverance was fresh in their minds, so long at least as they felt the full force of the fact that their rest on this day signified their rest from the unrequited toils of slavery.

To other nations, however, who had never been thus released from bondage in Egypt, and toward whom God had always acted as an enemy rather than as a friend, the observance of this day would have had no such significance, no significance at all. Indeed, as I have already stated, the observance of this day by other nations would have effectually defeated the very object which its observance by the Jews was intended to accomplish. Had it been observed by the whole world, it would not generally have commemorated any release from bondage in Egypt, and, by its general prevalence, it would have ceased to have any such special significance even among the Jews.

These facts are made still more clear by the following passages ;

“ Speak thou also unto the *children of Israel* [not unto the whole world], saying, Verily my sabbaths *ye* [not the whole world] shall keep : for it [the sabbath] is a *sign* between *me* and *you* [not between me and the whole world] throughout your generations. . . . It is a *sign* between *me* and the *children of Israel* [and them alone] forever ” (Ex. xxxi, 13–17). From these passages, we learn that, in addition to its being designed to commemorate the deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt, the sabbath was also designed to be a *sign* of the *special union, covenant, or partnership*, into which God had just then entered with *these particular people*, and with *them alone*. In other words, this institution, like the passover, the feast of tabernacles, etc., was designed to be one of the exclusive trade marks of the house or firm of Jehovah and Israel ; and, without forgery, it could not be used by any other parties. Since, if also used by other parties, a trade mark or sign would cease to be of any special benefit to the party who first adopted it, you see clearly that, had other nations also used the sign or trade mark of the sabbath, it would have ceased to be of any special benefit to the firm of Jehovah and Israel who first adopted it. It would have ceased to be any certain sign of the special union into which these two parties had entered with each other !

Since, then, the sabbath was intended to remain “ *forever* ” as a *sign* between *God* and the *Jews*, as a sign of the peculiar covenant or union into which he had entered with *them*, and *them alone*, it was certainly not intended to be ever used by any other gods, or by any other people. To this peculiar covenant or union, there were two parties, and only two, God and the Jews ; and you can no more bring in other people as parties on the one side with the Jews, than you can bring in other gods as parties on the other side with Jehovah. And since the thing signified

cannot belong to any other parties, the sign itself, the sabbath, cannot properly be used by any such parties.

All other nations, therefore, who have ever used this *sign* have been guilty of *forgery*; guilty of pretending that God had entered into a special covenant or union with *them* when, he had *not*; guilty of pretending that *they* were his peculiar people when they were *not*. In other words, the sabbath was a kind of promissory note, given by God to the Jews, whereby, in consideration of certain peculiar services rendered to him by them, he bound himself to pay to them certain things of very great value. All other people, therefore, who have ever used the sabbath, have forged for themselves a copy of this promissory note. In doing this they have feloniously made God seem to be their debtor when he was not, and have feloniously tried to collect from him things of great value, to which they had no right, and which he had never promised to them. In committing this forgery, the Christians and all others, if there be any others, who are guilty of these crimes, have acted just as wickedly as the common felon acts when he forges a note on his best friend, and collects, or attempts to collect, money which was never promised to him, and to which he never had the shadow of a right.

Still another proof that the sabbath was never designed for the whole world is found in the fact that its observance would have been utterly impossible to the inhabitants of the polar regions, in which the days do not correspond with the days in other parts of the world; and in the additional fact that, in many other parts of the world, the cold is so intense that the people would perish if they were not permitted to kindle fires on the sabbath the same as on other days. Besides all these things, if God ever intended that the gentiles should also observe the sabbath, why did he never say a word to them on the subject, while he was continually lecturing the Jews on the same subject? Without being so informed, how were the gentiles to know that, while no other Jewish institu-

tion applied also to themselves, the sabbath did? In view of all these things, can the gentile champions of the Bible inform us by what means, if not by downright theft or forgery, they came into possession of the sabbath?

Having now fully shown that, if there was ever any moral obligation connected with the observance of the sabbath, that obligation was confined to the Jews alone, I will proceed, without further comment, to show that, even among the Jews, there were many persons of high authority who regarded the sabbath, and other similar institutions, as priestly impositions of a pernicious character, and not as beneficent institutions of divine origin. "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and *sabbaths*, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is *iniquity*, even the *solemn meeting*" (Is. i, 13). Here, by an authority which the champions of the Bible will hardly dare to dispute, the sabbath, with its "solemn meeting" is denounced as an "iniquity" which God would gladly "away with," if he could. In Rom. xiv, 5, 6, Paul also says: "One man esteemeth one day [evidently the sabbath] above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." From this, we learn that the gentile Christians, for whose instruction Paul was specially commissioned to preach, were left at liberty to do as their own consciences dictated in regard to the observance or the sabbath.

"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them [the gentile converts to Christianity], and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. . . . Then [after the matter had been thoroughly discussed] pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to

Antioch with Paul and Barnabas ; . . . and they wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the *Gentiles* in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, *subverting your souls*, saying, Ye must be *circumcised*, and *keep the law*: to whom we gave *no such commandment*: for it seemed good to the Holy Ghost [a very high authority upon such a matter, was he not?], and to us, to lay upon you *no greater burden* than these necessary things; that ye abstain from *meats* offered to *idols*, and from *blood*, and from *things strangled*, and from *fornication*: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well" (Acts xv, 5, 6, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29). From these passages, we learn that the burden of keeping the law, like that of circumcision, was strictly forbidden to be put upon "the brethren which are of the *Gentiles*;" and since the keeping of the sabbath constituted an important portion of that burden, the keeping of that day was certainly forbidden to be required of those gentiles. And this prohibition was made by the apostles, the elders, the whole church at Jerusalem, and the Holy Ghost. What higher authority could we have? By what authority, then, do the champions of the Bible now violate this decree, and put upon "the brethren which are of the *Gentiles*" the keeping of the sabbath—one of the most obnoxious portions of the burden, forbidden, by this highest of all ecclesiastical tribunals, to be put upon the gentile converts to Christianity? If these champions cannot show some competent authority for their acts, do they not stand before us convicted of the fearful crime of "*subverting your souls*;" convicted of this crime, too, by the apostles, the elders, the whole church, and the Holy Ghost?

As I have already stated, the sabbath was designed to be "*forever a sign*" of the peculiar *union* or *covenant* into which *God*, the *sole contracting party* on the *one side*, had entered with the *children of Israel*, the *sole contracting party*

on the *other side*. But what was the nature of that peculiar union or covenant? The Bible everywhere represents it as a *marriage* union, by the terms of which God, as the bridegroom, bound himself to refrain from all love intercourse with any other people, and the Jewish Church, as the bride, bound herself to refrain from any love intercourse with any other god. The sabbath, therefore, being a sign of this particular union between these two sole contracting parties, constituted a certificate of the marriage which had taken place between them. God always so regarded it, always kept himself aloof from other people, and always denounced as whoredom any violation, on the part of the bride, of the terms of that marriage—any going aside after other gods.

“And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms; for the land [the Jewish Nation, his bride] hath committed great *whoredom* [how? Simply by]; *departing* from the *Lord* [her husband]. . . . And I will visit upon her [that is, punish her for the offenses committed by her in] the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them [other gods], and she decked herself with her ear-rings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers [those other gods], and *forgat me* [her husband], saith the Lord” (Hos. i, 2; ii, 13). After duly punishing his bride, however, for thus violating her marriage vow—after being as it were, divorced from her for a time—God forgives her, and says: “I will betroth thee unto me *forever* [there is never again to be any divorce]; yea, . . . I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord” (Hos. ii, 19, 20). Since this marriage with the Jews was to last “*forever*,” it is bound to be still in existence. The Jewish Church, then, being still God’s bride, the Christian Church, in sharing the matrimonial rights of that bride, necessarily does so, either as a polygamous second wife, or simply as a shameless harlot who defiles the true wife’s bed. She can show no proof, however, of

even a polygamous marriage, unless it be a forged and now greatly mutilated copy of the marriage certificate of the true wife whose place she has usurped, and whose bed she has defiled.

The Jews, however, do not seem to have had much regard for the obligations which their marriage with God placed them under as his bride. During a great portion of their career as a nation, they were constantly turning from the Lord, to whom they had been so solemnly united in marriage, and going "*whoring*," as God always called it, after other gods. This incorrigible disposition, on the part of his bride, to go whoring after other gods, kept the Lord nearly all the time in a towering rage of jealousy. And well it might, for there is no offense so unpardonable in a bride as is that of wantonly running after other men, and especially after her old lovers, the former rivals of the husband. When we thus understand the relation in which the Jewish Nation stood to God, we can easily understand why it was that he always regarded the violation of the sabbath and the going after other gods as the gravest offenses his people could commit. These offenses, involving, as they did, the violation of a solemn marriage contract, rendered the offenders, in God's sight, *whores* of the very worst description.

Admitting, however, for the sake of argument, that the champions of the Bible are correct in claiming, as they almost universally do, that the commandment, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy," was intended to be binding upon all other men, the same as upon the Jews, how does it happen that this commandment was never given to any but the Jews, and how does it happen that these champions themselves—how does it happen that, with very few exceptions, all the Christians of the world—are now found, with one accord, violating this commandment—rejecting the sabbath which this commandment requires to be kept holy? On all hands, it is admitted that this sabbath was the seventh day of the week, or Saturday. This sabbath

was established by those most potent of all arguments, pretended revelations from God and real rivers of human blood. Why, then, was it abandoned? Why and when did its observance cease to be a duty? Why and when did it become a duty to observe some other day in its stead? Dare the champions of the Bible even attempt to answer these fair and important questions? If not, I will proceed to show that the change of the sabbath from Saturday to Sunday was nothing more nor less than a monstrous priestly fraud.

I have already shown that, although God blessed the seventh day at the close of the creation, he did not require it or any other day to be observed as a sabbath by men until 2,500 years afterwards; and that he did not then require it to be observed by anybody except the children of Israel. I have already shown, too, that he did not require even the children of Israel to observe it because *he* had rested on that day 2,500 years before, but because he wished to have them, by the observance of this day, keep themselves and their posterity in grateful remembrance of the wonderful *deliverance* which he had given them from *bondage* in *Egypt*, and of the peculiar *union* or *covenant* into which he had entered with them.

In order, however, to set up their totally unfounded claim that the sabbath was designed for the whole world, the champions of the Bible are compelled to totally ignore the many passages of scripture which clearly confine the sabbath to the Hebrews alone. These champions are also compelled, in like manner, to totally ignore the many passages of the scripture which clearly teach that the sabbath was instituted for the sole purpose of commemorating the deliverance of the Hebrews from bondage, and of serving as a sign of the covenant relation into which God had entered with those people. Having thus totally ignored the plain teachings of all these scriptures—having thus ignored the only two reasons assigned in the whole Bible for the instituting of the sabbath—these champions un-

blushingly assume that, because God rested on that day at the close of creation, the observance of the day became binding upon all men from that time forward; equally binding when the whole human race consisted of only one poor mud man, not yet dry, who, being only a few hours old, at the beginning of the first sabbath, could not possibly have had any idea of either labor or rest.

As authority for thus founding the obligation to observe the sabbath upon the fable which has God rest on that day, the champions of the Bible are wont to quote the following passage: "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; *wherefore* the Lord *blessed* the sabbath-day [or rest-day] and *hallowed* it" (Ex. xx, 9-11). By this passage, however, the champions of the Bible really prove nothing at all. The former portion of the passage simply reiterates a command, already made, to rest on a certain day—a command which the people already understood to be founded upon the fact that they had been released from bondage in Egypt. But the people very naturally wished to know why they should rest on the "seventh day" in preference to any other. As yet, this matter has not been explained to them. In repeating the commandment, therefore, to observe the sabbath, Moses very properly gave the people, in the latter portion of the above passage, the reason why *that particular day* had been selected, in preference to any other, as the one to be observed. And that reason was that, in the creation, God had worked on the other six days and had rested on that day; and that "wherefore [that is, because of this rest on that day] the Lord *blessed* the sabbath-day and *hallowed* it."

Every grammarian knows that, when used as it here is, the conjunction *wherefore* or *therefore* is always employed to introduce the description or statement of an effect, a

result, or a conclusion, and to connect that description or statement with the preceding description or statement of the cause, the fact, or the argument from which that effect, that result, or that conclusion proceeds. In the passage just quoted, therefore, the blessing and the hallowing of the seventh day are represented as the results or consequences, and the only results or consequences, of God's having rested on that day. The fact that God rested on that day did not involve any obligation at all on the part of men to rest on the same day. If the author had meant to teach that the obligation to observe the seventh day as a day of rest followed, as a result or consequence of God's having once rested on that day, he would, with reference to that rest of God, have said, not as he did say, "*Wherefore God blessed the sabbath-day and hallowed it,*" but, "*Wherefore God commands all men to observe this day as a day of rest.*" This would have left no room for doubt in regard to the author's meaning. And when referring to the real reason assigned by God for requiring the Sabbath to be observed, when referring to the fact that the people had been miraculously delivered from bondage in Egypt, the author does, in this very same clear manner, say: "*Therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.*" The whole passage reads as follows: "*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day*" (Deut. v, 15). Here the reason for requiring the sabbath to be observed is clearly given; and this reason, which is the only one given in the whole Bible, indisputably confirms the obligation to observe that day to those alone who had been released from bondage in Egypt. The whole matter may be made perfectly clear by combining the various passages in question as follows:

(Moses)—"Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy

God: in it thou shalt not do any work.” (People)—“But, Moses, please inform us *why* we shall not do any work on the seventh day?” (Moses)—“Because thou wast a *servant* in the land of Egypt and . . . the Lord thy God *brought thee out thence* through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: and because, on account of this wonderful deliverance, the Lord thy God *commanded* thee to *keep the sabbath-day*.” (People)—“Thank you, Moses! Your answer satisfies us that it is, indeed, our solemn duty to observe some one day in every seven as a day of rest. But why are we not permitted to observe any day we please of the whole seven? Why has the seventh day been fixed upon for our sabbath or rest day in preference to any other?” (Moses)—“Because the *seventh day* is the *sabbath* of the *Lord thy God*.” (People)—“But what are we to understand by the ‘sabbath of the Lord?’” (Moses)—“You are to understand that, ‘in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and *rested* [or sabbathed] the *seventh day*.’” (People)—“But did God’s act of resting on that particular day render it any better, any more worthy of our observance than any other day?” (Moses)—“Of itself, God’s act of resting on that day did *not* have any such effect upon the day; but, on account of that rest, ‘the Lord *blessed* the sabbath day [or rest day] and *hallowed* it;’ and the acts of *blessing* and *hallowing* did, as the highest of all possible honors, distinguish that day above *all others*, and render it more *worthy* than *any other* to be observed as *our sabbath*.”

In order, however, to make the sabbath seem to be the common property of the whole world, the champions of the Bible, as I have already shown, are compelled to flatly contradict all of these plain scriptures, and to blasphemously declare that “God did *not* command thee, as these scriptures so positively declare that he did, ‘to keep the sabbath day’ because ‘thou wast a *servant* in the land of *Egypt* and’ because ‘the Lord thy God *brought thee out thence*,’ but because, some 2,500 years before, *he* had *rested*

on that day." These champions, however, fail to inform us how it happened that the reason assigned by them for the commandment in question existed for so many centuries before the commandment itself was given. They also fail to inform us how it happened that the commandment was never given at all to any but the Jews, and that, when given to them, it was based upon reasons with which no other people had anything to do. Does not their conduct in regard to this matter exhibit unmistakable marks of deliberate fraud? Is it not the felonious attempt of a harlot to obtain possession of the marriage certificate of the wife whose bed she has defiled?

Having thus, by means which we see will not for a moment bear the test of fair examination, established, to their own apparent satisfaction, the doctrine that, from the very close of the creation, the observance of the sabbath had been made binding upon all men, having thus, with great difficulty and not a little bloodshed, established this doctrine on the single fact that a certain fable, after having God wearied with six days of labor, has him rest on the day in question, we would expect the champions of the Bible to cling tenaciously to this day as the only true sabbath. To our astonishment, however, we find them, at the present time, almost universally rejecting this day, and, in its stead, observing another day which is not only utterly unsupported by the all-important fact in question, but against which that fact bears with all its weight. Is there not something very suspicious in this matter?

Teaching as they do, that the obligation involved in the commandment to observe the sabbath rests entirely upon the single fact that God had once *rested* on *that particular day*, can the champions of the Bible, with the slightest shadow of consistency, claim that they fulfil that obligation, or obey the commandment which was designed to enforce the fulfilment of that obligation, by observing a day with which the obligation is not, in any way, con-

nected, and which the commandment expressly declares shall not be so observed? When hard-pressed, most of them now claim that it is sufficient to give God, by way of rest or idleness, any one-seventh we please of all our time. This, however, is simply to insult him, and not to obey his commandment at all. According to their own teachings, God, for a particular purpose—the commemoration of his own period of rest at the close of creation—strictly commands us all to observe the particular day upon which that rest occurred, and just as strictly forbids us to thus observe any other day. Admitting that these teachings be correct, then it is evident that, by observing some other day, and by connecting with that other day some other idea—an idea never even hinted at by God himself—these champions are using the surest means of thwarting the only object for which, according to their own teachings, the sabbath was ever instituted. Besides this, by teaching that God simply requires one-seventh of our time, and that we may give him any one day of the week we please, they blasphemously degrade him from the rank of a kind and loving father to that of a merciless landlord who indiscriminately demands, as a kind of rental, 14 2-7 per cent. of all our time. Of what possible use to God can this tribute of time be, especially when it tends to thwart rather than to accomplish the object for which the sabbath was instituted? Do not fresh proofs of fraud constantly appear?

Had the commandment to observe the sabbath been given by God, without any explanation at all of the object for which that institution was originated, that commandment alone ought to have been sufficient of itself to confine our observance to the particular day and the particular manner prescribed by that commandment. When, however, God condescends, as the champions of the Bible all admit that he does, to give us a specific reason why one particular day and no other should be observed, and why it should be observed in one particular manner and in no

other, then we are certainly guilty, not only of ungratefully disobeying, but, also, of blasphemously mocking him, when we pretend to fulfil his commandment by observing, as we do, some other day in some other manner.

To render the case still more clear, let us suppose an exactly parallel case. Let us suppose that seven men are arrested on a charge of murder. Let us suppose that, when brought to trial, six of them are clearly proved to be innocent, and are ordered by the court to be discharged while the seventh man is just as clearly proved to be guilty, and is sentenced to be executed by hanging. Let us suppose, further, that, adopting the logic of the champions of the Bible, the sheriff, who is charged with the execution of these orders, holds that, just so some one man of the seven is killed, it makes no difference which one that is nor how the killing is done. Let us suppose, finally, that, as the result of this logic, he releases the seventh man, whom he was ordered to hang, and to whom alone of the whole seven the sentence of death was applicable, and shoots one of the other six, whom he was ordered to discharge, and to whom the sentence of death was not at all applicable. Would the champions of the Bible hold that, in acting thus, this sheriff had faithfully fulfilled his orders? Would they not, on the contrary, hold that he was guilty of a double and extremely culpable act of disobedience?

And are these champions themselves any less guilty than this man would be of double disobedience? In their hands they hold two orders which they admit came from God himself. The one of these orders strictly requires them to observe as a sabbath or rest day one particular day of the week, and recites a good reason why such observance is applicable to that day, and to that day alone. The other order, by peremptorily commanding them to labor on all of the other six days, just as strictly forbids them to observe any of these days as a sabbath or day of rest. With these two confessedly divine orders in their

hands, however, these presumptuous champions persistently violate the one by refusing to rest on Saturday, as the order requires them to rest, and the other by resting on Sunday, one of the days upon which the order forbids them to so rest. As the sheriff, in the case which we have supposed, only aggravated his offense of releasing the condemned man by the killing of an uncondemned man in his stead, so these champions only aggravate their offense of violating the real sabbath—the day hallowed by God himself to the purpose of holy rest, by observing an unhallowed day in its stead. They would evidently be far less guilty if they observed no day at all.

According to their own testimony, the sabbath was instituted by God himself, an unchangeable being, and, for a definite and unchangeable reason, fixed by him upon the seventh day. It is evident, therefore, that, if the testimony of these champions be worth anything, this institution was made, from the beginning, utterly incapable of being either abclished, or changed to another day, by any authority inferior to that of God himself. If, then, these champions cannot show positive proof that God himself changed this institution from the seventh day to the first, they are bound to stand before the world convicted of the grave offenses of contradicting their own former testimony, of basely deceiving the people, of sacrilegiously violating the true sabbath, and of blasphemously mocking God by offering to him the unhallowed services of a false sabbath.

If those who have rejected the sabbath of the Bible, and adopted Sunday in its stead, really believe that the commandment, “Remember the sabbath day [so called from God’s having sabbathed or rested on that day] to keep it holy,” is just as well fulfilled by refusing to “Remember the sabbath day,” and by refusing “to keep it holy”—if they really believe that this commandment is just as well fulfilled by the observance of some other day as it is by the observance of the sabbath itself—if they really believe that God is simply a land-Lord indiscrim-

inately exacting, as his rental, 14 2-7 per cent. of the time of all of his tenants—if they really believe that it makes no difference to him from what part of the week that 14 2-7 per cent. is taken, why do they not permit every man to observe or pay to God whichever day of the week he pleases? Why is it that they try to compel all other persons to observe the same day that they themselves have selected? Why is it that, by the most horrible of all imaginable tortures, they have put to death untold thousands of men, women, and children for refusing to observe Sunday as the sabbath, or for continuing to observe the sabbath of the Bible? Why is it that, even in this boasted land of liberty, they have oppressive laws enacted to compel the people, regardless of their individual wishes or preferences, to observe Sunday, and Sunday alone, as the sabbath? If I rest on every Wednesday, or if I rest one-seventh of every day in the week, do I not as fully observe the sabbath—do I not as fully pay to the land-Lord his rental—as do they? What better authority can they show for their pretended observance of the sabbath than I can show for mine? When, therefore, I have observed my sabbath in the middle of the week—when I have thus paid my share of the land-Lord's rental—why is that, because I labor on the following Sunday, they denounce me as an ungodly wretch—an impious profaner of the sabbath, on the certain road to eternal damnation? And why do they, even in this life, punish me as a sabbath-breaker?

The most intensely pious, the most thoroughly orthodox persons that I ever knew, were certain men that used, almost weekly, to prowl around the outskirts of my premises, on Sunday, trying to catch me at work, that they might make an example of me, vindicate the sacredness of their so-called sabbath, promote the glory of God, and, last but not least, accumulate a little filthy lucre on Sunday—a few dollars of my honest earnings, torn from me as a fine and paid to them for their infamously pious act of informing against me. After spending the whole week, as my busi-

ness then compelled me to spend it, in a sedentary occupation, I did not need physical rest on Sunday. On the contrary, I really did need physical exercise, and I really did wish to work upon my grounds. To me, therefore, the espionage of these truly pious men was a real—a hurtful—persecution. My health as well as my grounds suffered in consequence of it. I did not, however, much blame these godly men themselves. They were simply doing what, under similar circumstances, almost every other truly zealous Christian would feel it his duty to do. They were simply trying to “kill two birds with one stone”—to serve God, and, at the same time, to make a little money on Sunday. I did, however, and I do now, denounce, as a burning disgrace to America and to civilization, the law that demands such persecutions. All of our so-called Sunday laws should have perished with the Spanish Inquisition. And yet such laws have been found to be absolutely indispensable to the sustaining of this abominable priestly imposition called the sabbath.

Time will not permit me to give anything like a full history of the rejection of the sabbath of the Bible, by the Christian Church, and the adoption, in its stead, of Sunday, the sabbath or sacred feast-day of the idolatrous worshipers of the sun. Suffice it to say that, although Sunday was observed by the early Christians as a day of feasting and rejoicing, often as a day of licentious excesses, in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus on that day, it was not, for several centuries, regarded by them as the sabbath, as a substitute for the sabbath, or as, in any other sense, a holy day. The people regarded it just as we now regard Washington's birthday, the Fourth of July, or any other day which, for some specific reason, has come, by common consent, to be devoted to general enjoyment. As we do not now hold that there is anything peculiarly sacred about any of these days, and as we do not hold that we are under any moral obligation to observe them, so it was with the early Christians in regard to Sunday.

If they saw fit to do so, they might, without either sin or blame, stay at home and work on that day. When, however, they did meet to celebrate the day, their rules required them to celebrate it with demonstrations of joy alone. They were not permitted to mourn, to kneel in prayer, or to do anything else inconsistent with the object of the meeting, which was "to see a jolly good time generally."

Of these meetings, Tertullian says: "We count fasting or kneeling in worship on the Lord's day to be unlawful. We rejoice in the same privilege also from Easter to Whitsunday" (De Corona, Sect. 3). Since it would have been utterly impossible for them to observe, as a sabbath, the whole period of fifty days that intervenes between Easter and Whitsunday, and since they observed this whole period just as they observed Sunday, it is evident that this latter day, which came to be called the Lord's day, was not observed as a sabbath. Indeed, on account of their joy, the people were permitted to indulge in many liberties on this day which were denied to them on all other days. In Apostolical Constitutions, Book 2, Sect. 7, Par. 59, we read: "Now we exhort you, brethren and fellow-servants, to avoid vain talk and obscene discourses, . . . since we do not permit you so much as on the *Lord's days*, which are *days of joy*, to speak or act anything unseemly." From this, it is clear that, if they had been permitted to engage at all, on any day, in "vain talk and obscene discourses," or in anything else of an "unseemly" character, that day would certainly have been the so-called "Lord's day." Notwithstanding this exhortation, however, the "brethren and fellow-servants" did, on the day in question, indulge, to so immoderate an extent, in "vain talk and obscene discourses," and in other things of an "unseemly" character, that, by their more moral and temperate pagan neighbors, they came to be utterly abhorred as an abominably licentious people.

When was it, then, and by what authority, that the

sabbath of the Bible was rejected, by the Christian Church, and Sunday, the sacred feast-day of the sun-worshipers, adopted in its stead? In answer to these questions, I will say that the change of the Church from the observance of the sabbath of the Bible to that of the sun-worshipers was very gradual, and that it was not completed before the year 325, in which the first Council of Nice virtually paganized the Christian Religion, by expunging from it the sabbath and almost everything else in it that had been derived from the Jews, and by engrafting upon it, in the place of the institutions and doctrines thus expunged, the sacred feast-day of the sun, and many others of the religious institutions and fundamental doctrines of the pagans who evidently controlled that Council, and who, from that time onward, just as evidently controlled the whole Church. Indeed, after these changes were thus made, very little of Christianity remained to the Church, except the name. Even after that time, however—even as late as the fifth century—there were certain sects in the Church who still persisted in observing the sabbath of the Bible, and who chose rather to be persecuted as heretics, by the Church, than to observe the pagan sabbath that the Church had adopted.

It is a well established historical fact that the week of seven days, just as we now have it, was in general use among the pagan nations of the east, and that, so far from having been borrowed from the Jews, as the champions of the Bible would have us believe that it was, it had been handed down among these pagan nations from time immemorial. The origin of this, the most ancient of all the artificial divisions of time, as well as the reason of its general prevalence among the nations who were not in communication with each other, is clearly perceived in the names of the days of which it is composed; the names having been given in honor of the sun, the moon, and the five planets that were known to the ancients. On account of the motions, real or apparent, in which they differed

from what are called fixed stars, these celestial bodies were, naturally enough, regarded by the ignorant and superstitious people of ancient times, as living and conscious beings—as the principal deities that controlled the affairs of men and of the universe. Indeed, half the people of the world still regard these bodies in this same light. The fact that these bodies were all equally visible, and all equally objects of interest to all nations, is sufficient to account for the well-known fact that a remarkable similarity to one another prevails among all the religions of the world, as well as for the fact that the week, as a division of time, prevails among almost all nations. The same fact also explains why it was that the number seven was almost universally regarded as a sacred number. Thus, in the New Testament, we have seven candlesticks, suggestive of seven lights, and many other similar examples.

Of these seven celestial bodies, however, the sun, on account of his immense superiority, in size, in brilliancy, and in power, was very naturally, and very properly, fixed upon as the great chief of these deities. All things of which men then had any certain knowledge being produced by his power or influence, he was very naturally and very properly fixed upon as the “Creator,” the “Supreme Being,” the “Most High God,” the “God of gods and Lord of lords,” the “Giver of life,” a “Consuming Fire” [What could be a more appropriate appellation of the sun?], the “God that Dwelleth [as doth the sun] in Light Unapproachable,” etc. In short, the sun was regarded as a principal deity, in all the religions of the east, that of the Jews not excepted. “Then spake Joshua to the *Lord* . . . and said [while speaking to the *Lord*, you will notice], *Sun*, stand thou still upon Gibeon,” etc. “And there was no day like that before it or after it that the *Lord* hearkened unto the voice of a man” (Josh. x, 12–14). Here the Lord addressed was nothing more nor less than the sun, which, on this occasion, did hearken unto Joshua’s voice

and stand still when he ordered it to do so, but which had never before thus “hearkened unto the voice of a man,” and has never done so since. This was the “Most High God,” the “Lord over all,” and, in Joshua’s opinion at least, was a very different being from Jehovah, who was simply the tutelary divinity of the Hebrews alone, and who, if the stories of the Bible are not all mere fictions, had, a thousand times, before that day, “hearkened unto the voice of a man;” of Moses and of other men, and who, afterwards, frequently did the same. From this great prominence of the sun, the day, named in his honor and consecrated to his service, was observed by most nations with very great solemnity.

The pagans, who generally entertained a superstitious regard for the sacredness of Sunday, very naturally became intense haters of the Jews, who habitually profaned that day, and who, as we all know, were wont to observe Saturday, the sabbath of the Bible. On the other hand, the Jews, who were always noted for their bigotry and intolerance, became equally intense haters of these pagan worshipers of the sun—these violaters of the only true sabbath. Indeed, so intense did this mutual hatred finally become that, on each side, it extended to all the religious institutions peculiar to the other. On the one side, the Jews came to regard Sunday with a kind of abhorrence as a day prostituted by their hated rivals to the monstrous uses of idolatry. On the other side, for similar reasons, the pagans came to regard the Jewish sabbath in the same light. From the most tender age, the children, on each side, were, as a religious duty, so thoroughly imbued with a prejudice against the so-called sabbath of the other that they were not likely ever to honor that day by making it a special day of rest, or of worship. If they observed the day at all, it was only in such a way as to dishonor it and to exasperate their rivals who so greatly revered it.

Among the early Christians, therefore, who were composed of both Jews and pagans, these strong prejudices

still existed, and proved to be the source of innumerable and extremely bitter dissensions. On the one hand, as a matter of course, the Jewish portion of them still tenaciously clung to the sabbath of the Bible. Many of these, indeed, were as much Jews after their conversion to Christianity as they were before. They still held to circumcision, still scrupulously observed the sabbath, the passover, and all the other institutions and ceremonies of the Jewish Religion. They differed from the other Jews only in accepting Jesus as the Messiah of the Jewish nation, while the balance of the Jews rejected him as an impostor and still looked for the true Messiah to come. On the other hand, equally as a matter of course, the pagan portion of the early Christian Church, many of whom were only nominally converted to Christianity, still regarded Sunday and many other pagan institutions, doctrines, and ceremonies with a great deal of reverence, while they looked upon the sabbath of the Bible, as they did upon circumcision, the passover, the feast of tabernacles, etc., as a purely Jewish institution with which themselves had nothing to do.

Many of these pagan converts, not caring to continue the observance of Sunday, or of any of the other sacred days of paganism, and not believing it was their duty to begin the observance of Saturday, or of any of the other sacred days of Judaism, set themselves in opposition to every form of the sabbatical institution. They argued that, since God and nature did not observe any particular day as a sabbath or rest day, men were under no obligation to so observe any day. Among these anti-sabbatarians, may be mentioned Justin Martyr, Origen, and many other noted fathers of the Church. Could these men have succeeded in breaking down that institution, they would have conferred an immense favor upon the human race.

As I have already said, however, most of the pagan converts to Christianity were strongly inclined, by their early teachings, to still regard Sunday as a sacred day—a

day of solemn worship. In thus giving to Sunday the preference over the Jewish or Bible sabbath, they were greatly strengthened by the thought that they were thereby conferring an honor upon the day upon which Jesus was supposed to have arisen from the dead. And thus, for more than three centuries, did these two sabbaths wage against each other a war of extermination in the bosom of the Christian Church. The champions of Sunday, however, although rapidly coming into the ascendancy, never claimed for the observance of that day anything higher than human authority, rendered sacred by its great antiquity and by its general acceptance among men. In this respect, they differed very widely from the champions of the sabbath of the Bible who always did claim for this day a divine origin.

Although a vast majority of the converts to Christianity, and especially of those only nominally converted thereto, soon came to be drawn from the ranks of paganism, and although, from this fact, the reverence for the sabbath of the Bible was constantly growing less and less in the church, while, from the same fact, that for the sabbath of the pagans was just as constantly, and by just the same ratio, on the increase, nevertheless, as I have already intimated, the champions of the former day seem to have remained in the ascendancy, especially in the eastern portion of the church, for over three hundred years. Of this long and bitter conflict between the two sabbaths, and of its final result, Coleman speaks as follows: "During the early ages of the church, it [Sunday] was never entitled 'the *sabbath*,' this word being confined to the *seventh day* of the *week*, the *Jewish Sabbath*, which, as we have already said, continued to be observed for several centuries by the converts to Christianity. No law or precept appears to have been given by Christ or the apostles, either for the abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath, or the institution of the Lord's day, or the substitution of the first for the seventh day of the week. The observance of the Lord's day was or-

dered [who ordered it, and by what authority did he order it?] while yet the sabbath of the Jews was continued; nor was the latter suspended until the former had acquired the same solemnity and importance [by what authority, except that of pagan partiality, did it acquire this “same solemnity and importance?”], which belonged, at first [why not always?] to that great day which God originally ordained and blessed. . . . But in time, after the Lord’s day was fully established [by what authority, except that of paganism in the church, did it become thus “fully established?”], the observance of the Sabbath of the Jews was gradually discontinued, and was finally denounced as heretical” (Anc. Christ. Exem., chap. xxvi). In this and other similar quotations, the brackets are mine.

The ascendancy which, as I have already shown, was, at first, held in the church, by the advocates of the Jewish or Bible Sabbath, seems to have been finally lost by them and gained by their rivals, the advocates of the pagan sabbath, about the year 321. In that year, Constantine, Emperor of Rome, a monster whose hands were almost constantly dripping with the blood of murder; a monster who was guilty of almost every form of infamous crime; a monster who was still a zealous defender of all the sacred days and of all the monstrous rites of paganism; a monster whose very name befouls the page of history upon which it is written, issued an edict requiring Sunday, the pagan sabbath, to be, on pain of death, solemnly observed as a day of rest and of worship: worship offered, not to the God of the Jews and Christians, but to the God of the pagans, the God from whom the day derived its name, and in honor of whom it had long been observed.

In addition to his desire to promote the interests of the pagan religion, Constantine also desired “to have *nothing* [neither gods nor sacred days] in *common* with that most hostile rabble, the Jews.” Hence his edict to break down the Jewish Sabbath. Sylvester, who was then the head bishop or pope of Rome, and who was a corrupt and

pliant instrument in the hands of this mighty pagan monster, endorsed this edict, and thus, by the power said to have been conferred upon Saint Peter and his successors in office, loosed all Christians from all obligation to observe the sabbath of the Lord their God, and bound them under the most solemn obligation to observe the sabbath of a purely pagan deity. So far as its observance in the Christian Church was concerned, the sabbath of the Bible never recovered from the deadly blow thus given it by a crime-blackened pagan emperor and his instrument, a corrupt, cunning, and sycophantic Catholic priest.

Soon after this, the party that advocated the observance of the sabbath of the Bible dwindled into insignificance. It is true that, in certain obscure parts of Christendom, this sabbath still survived for many years. Its survival, however, was that of a wasted invalid who could not, and of a hunted outlaw who dared not, ever again appear openly before the powerful and now thoroughly paganized church. Its open observance became once more confined, almost exclusively, to the Jews, for whom alone it was instituted, and to whom alone there was a good reason for observing it.

Paganism having thus fully triumphed over the Bible and over primitive Christianity, not only in regard to the sabbath, but, also, in regard to many fundamental doctrines—in regard even to the gods themselves—the devout pagans, who now constituted the great body of the church, bowed the knee in worship, on the Sun-god's day, with their faces to the sun, seeing God in that great luminary, just as they saw him therein before their nominal conversion to Christianity. So much, indeed, did their mode of worship still resemble that of the professed worshipers of the sun, that they were often charged with actually worshipping that luminary. And this charge they did not always care to deny. Indeed, for the express purpose of promoting their own interests by increasing the number of conversions from the ranks of paganism, the Christian

priesthood purposely brought their religion to so nearly resemble paganism, that, in order to become a Christian, a pagan had very little more to do than to merely adopt the name of Christianity. His conversion did not necessarily make any material change either in his forms of worship or in the ideas of deity upon which these forms were founded. From this time onward, therefore, conversions from paganism to the now powerful Christian Church were made by the millions. "The most respectable Bishops," says Gibbon, "had persuaded themselves that the ignorant rustics [upon whom the Church always had depended for the great majority of her converts] would more cheerfully renounce the superstition of paganism, if they found some *resemblance*, some *compensation*, in the bosom of *Christianity*. Remember that these were "the *most respectable Bishops*." What, then, of the less respectable Bishops, and of the common priests? So thoroughly, indeed, was Christianity now paganized that if at times a pagan convert was required to pay adoration to Jesus or some other new deity, he still, in this new deity, recognized his old god by the halo of the sun which, in pictures and paintings, always was, and still is, thrown around the head of the new deity. The new deity, too, like the old, was always represented to his imagination as a glorious luminary of some kind, never as an opaque body. He was always represented as a "Consuming Fire"—as one whose countenance gave forth light similar to that of the sun. "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun [their old god]; for the *Lord God* [their new deific luminary] giveth them *light*" (Rev. xxii, 5). In what respect did this new deity or luminary differ from the old, and why were the worshipers of the new luminary, like those of the old, always called the "*children of light*."

In his History of the Sabbath, page 354, J. N. Andrews says: "The body of Nominal Christians, which resulted from this union of pagan rites with Christian worship, ar-

rogated to itself the title of Catholic Church, while the true people of God, who resisted these dangerous innovations, were branded as heretics, and cast out of the church. It is not strange that the Sabbath should lose ground in such a body, in its struggle with its rival, the festival of the sun." The sabbath of the Bible, however, although thus trampled under foot and crushed in the Church, was not yet entirely dead. This we learn from the fact that, in the year 364, nearly thirty years afterwards, the Council of Laodicea had to complete its destruction by a decree which not only commanded the observance of the pagan sabbath, but also pronounced a curse of eternal damnation, including, of course, death at the stake in this life, upon all who should dare to Judaize, as it was called, by observing the sabbath of the Bible—by obeying the Fourth Commandment.

In his Dissertation on the Lord's-day Sabbath, pp. 33, 34, 44, 1633, speaking of these things, Prynne says: "It is certain that Christ himself, his apostles, and the primitive Christians for some good space of time, did constantly observe the seventh-day sabbath, . . . the evangelists and Saint Luke in the Acts ever styling it the Sabbath day, . . . and making mention of its . . . solemnization by the apostles and other Christians; . . . it being still solemnized by many Christians after the apostles' times, even till the Council of Laodicea [A.D. 364], as ecclesiastical writers and the twenty-ninth canon of that Council testify, which runs thus: Because Christians ought not to Judaize, and to rest in the Sabbath, but to work in that day [which many did refuse at that time to do]. But preferring in honor the Lord's day (there being then a great controversy among Christians which of these two days . . . should have precedence), if they desired to rest, they should do this as Christians. Wherefore if they shall be found to Judaize [by observing the sabbath of the Bible—by obeying the Fourth Commandment], let them be accursed from Christ.' . . . The seventh-day Sabbath was

. . . solemnized by Christ, the apostles, and primitive Christians till the Laodicean council did in a manner quite abolish the observation of it. . . . The council of Laodicea [A.D. 364] . . . first settled the observation of the Lord's day, and prohibited . . . the keeping of the Jewish Sabbath under an anathema."

You now know how the Christians came by their counterfeit sabbath or so-called Lord's day. I have fully shown that, from the very beginning, the whole thing has been a monstrous priestly fraud; or, rather, three such frauds. The first of these frauds was the one by which that fearful incubus called the sabbath was originally fixed upon the Jews. The second was that by which this incubus was extended to all men. The third was that by which the sabbath of the Bible was made to give place to that of the pagans; to the Lord's day or Sunday as we now have it. All of these frauds have already been sufficiently explained.

That the so-called sabbath now in use throughout nearly all Christendom is one of the basest frauds ever imposed upon the ignorance, superstition, and fear of the people, no honest and intelligent person who is acquainted with its history will pretend to deny. The true Catholic, however, blinded by priestcraft as he necessarily must be, can see nothing at all of a fraudulent nature either in the proceedings by which the sabbath of the Jews was extended to the Christians, or in those by which this sabbath, after it had been thus extended, was discarded and the sabbath of the pagans adopted in its stead. He holds that his church, through her supreme head, the pope, retains the power which is said to have been once bestowed by Jesus upon Saint Peter, to infallibly bind or loose whatever she may see fit, both on earth and in heaven. He holds that, in the exercise of this her power of infallibility, she actually did first bind the original Jewish sabbath upon all men, and then actually did loose all men from every obligation to observe that sabbath and bind them

under the most awful obligations to observe the sabbath of the pagans. To the Catholics, therefore, who, in this matter, undeniably do exhibit a certain kind of consistency, I have no more to say. But how is it with my Protestant brethren who deny that the Catholic Church has any power either to annul or to reverse any of the commandments of God? According to the testimony of the Bible, God commands them to rest on a certain day. The Catholic Church, however, forbids them to rest on that day. God commands them to labor on a certain other day. The Catholic Church, however, forbids them to labor on that day. Here the Catholic Church directly reverses two of God's most positive commandments, and, in both cases, the Protestants obey her commandments, and disobey his. Will they please rise and explain why they do this? In thus preferring the commandments of the Catholic Church to those of God, do they not unequivocally declare, much louder than they could declare in words, that they regard her as higher authority than they regard him—that they regard her as more worthy than he to be honored and obeyed? Is there any possible way for them to escape this extremely grave imputation, except by an admission that she does indeed stand, as she claims to stand, in God's stead, and that, consequently, her decrees are the infillible decrees of God himself?

Of necessity, the Catholic Church either does or does not possess the power, legitimately derived from God through Jesus and Saint Peter, to thus suspend, annul, or reverse a positive commandment of God. If she does possess this power in regard to any one commandment, such as the one in question, then she indisputably possesses the same power in regard to all the other commandments of God—in regard to all the other portions of God's Holy Word. She can suspend, annul, or reverse the entire Bible, and either leave us without a Bible or give us a Bible of her own composition. If, as she claims, she actually does possess all this power—and she certainly

possesses it all if she possesses any portion of it—then she certainly is, as she claims to be, the only true Church, and all Protestants certainly are, as she declares them to be, so many vile heretics on the certain road to eternal damnation. If, on the other hand, she does not possess all of this power, or any portion of it, then her pretended reversal of the commandments in question was certainly nothing more nor less than an impious mockery which certainly could not, and just as certainly did not loose us from the obligations formerly resting upon us to observe the sabbath of the Bible, nor place us under any obligations to observe her pretended sabbath—the sacred festival day of the pagan sun-worshipers. Her whole action in this matter was certainly null and void if nothing worse. And all Protestants know, or at least, claim to know, that she actually does not possess any power at all to legitimately make any change whatever in any portion of God's Holy Word; that all her claim to such power is the impious arrogance of Antichrist. And yet knowing, or, at least, claiming to know, all of this, these Protestants, with very few exceptions, all join her in her impious and arrogant acts of violating the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue, trampling under foot the sabbath of the Lord their God, and mocking him with the idolatrous services of a false sabbath which he has strictly forbidden to be observed—the sabbath of his great rival god, the sun. In any view of the case, therefore, the Protestant division of the Christian Church stand convicted of deceiving the people, of desecrating the sabbath, of practicing idolatrous worship, and of many other equally graves offenses. To these despicable convicts, I will simply say, in the language of another: “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the condemnation of hell?”

And now, in conclusion, I wish to call your attention to the unjust discrimination which, in the enforcement of this monstrous imposition called the sabbath, is always made in favor of the rich and powerful, and against

the poor and the feeble. I wish to show you that the whole affair is an unspeakably atrocious conspiracy on the part of the priesthood, the princes, the money lenders, and other non-producers—the drones and the leeches of society—for the express purpose of robbing the people, and of thus keeping them in perpetual poverty and bondage; for the express purpose of rendering the rich and the powerful, who do not labor at all, still richer and still more powerful, and of rendering the poor and the feeble, who perform all the labor, still poorer, still more feeble, and, consequently, still more servile. When this atrocious conspiracy, together with many others, all tending to the same end, was first concocted, all of these drones, all of these leeches, all of these various classes of conspirators, were included in one single class—the class that have cursed every nation and every age of the world—the priesthood, who then usurped all authority, civil and religious, as well as the avenues to wealth and to power. I will examine this conspiracy, however, only as it now operates upon ourselves.

As I have already said, the burdens of this idolatrous institution, this counterfeit sabbath, this so-called Lord's day, fall almost exclusively upon the poor, who, for subsistence, depend solely upon their daily labor. Upon its inventors, the priesthood themselves, no portion of the burdens of this monstrous imposition falls at all. They are permitted to pursue their ordinary occupation on this day the same as on any other. Indeed, it gives to their trade or profession an entire monopoly of this day. So far, therefore, from resting themselves, on this day, as they require all others to rest, from their ordinary occupations, they are wont to make it a special day of labor, and one upon which they realize greater profits from their trade than they realize on any other day. In these great profits which thus accrue to themselves from this monstrous monopoly, you clearly see one of the principal objects for which the sabbatical imposition was concocted. Indeed,

we all know that, if this imposition were entirely abolished, the greater portion of the priesthood would, at once, be compelled to abandon their present worse than useless occupation, and to engage in other occupations, less agreeable to themselves, but more beneficial to society. So long, however, as this imposition is tolerated, so long as the people tamely submit to be driven, once a week, like so many sheep to the shearer, from their farms, their workshops, etc., into the churches, just so long will the priesthood seem to be serving the people, and just so long will they seem to have a claim upon the people's money.

Either by means of unjust and oppressive laws, or by means of persistent appeals made to his superstitious hopes and fears, every laboring man is robbed by this imposition of one-seventh of his entire time; of fourteen and two-sevenths per cent. of his entire means of subsistence. And we all know that, as a rule, such a tax is sufficient to prevent any poor man from ever rising above his poverty. Indeed, we all know that very few wealthy men could long bear up under an extra tax of fourteen and two-sevenths per cent. of their entire income. Besides being burdened with this oppressive tax, the poor man is generally bullied and threatened with hell until he contributes to the support of the priesthood out of the pittance that he may have been able to save from the proceeds of the other six-sevenths of his time. His family may really need the little that he might earn or produce on Sunday, and yet he is not permitted to supply that need.

With the rich, the case is very different. Not being accustomed, on any day, to engage in servile or manual labor, they can nominally fulfil the requirements of the day in question without any change at all in their daily habits or in their ordinary occupations. Besides this, their incomes, not depending upon their labor, go right on accruing on Sunday the same as on any other day. Take Vanderbilt, for instance. His income on Sunday is about twenty-four thousand dollars, or about forty dollars for

every breath he draws. And yet Sunday does not tax him at all. It makes no change at all in either his occupation or his income. Why should this be so? Why should the poor man, by being permitted to labor on Sunday, be deprived of his entire income of that day, of the entire dollar which he would otherwise earn, and which his family often so sorely needs, for which, too, he would perform labor beneficial to society, while the rich man, who performs no such labor, and whose family knows no need at all, is permitted on the same day to pursue his ordinary occupation, and to draw his entire unearned income of twenty-four thousand dollars? Does not this case clearly prove that I am correct in charging that one of the principal designs of the sabbatical imposition always has been to render the poor poorer and the rich richer? Is not the whole imposition founded upon the monstrous principle "that unto everyone which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him?" Stop one-seventh of every rich man's income, the same as you stop that of every poor man—compel the priests to close their shops on Sunday, the same as you compel blacksmiths, bootmakers, and other artisans to close theirs—in a word, make the operation of this Sunday imposition equal upon all classes, and how long would it be before these privileged classes, who, because they are gainers by it, are now so loud in defense of this imposition, would be just as loud in its condemnation? Does any intelligent person believe that perfectly equal Sunday laws would be sustained for even one day?

When hard pressed, as they always are when called upon to defend their Sunday imposition, the champions of the Bible are wont to assume an exceedingly wise look, and to declare that men are so constituted, physically, that they need to rest on every seventh day, and that, if this rest were denied to them, the human race would rapidly decline. This would-be wise declaration, however, amounts to no argument at all. On the contrary, it is an

entire abandonment of every argument ever advanced in support of the sabbatical imposition as a religious institution; for, while the Bible has God assign three other reasons why the sabbath should be observed—while it has him, for a good reason, confine this observance to the seventh day alone—while it has him, by withholding manna on that day for forty years, miraculously demonstrate that no other day would be accepted by him as the sabbath—while it has him punish men with death, for working on that day, just the same whether they had, or had not, rested on one of the preceding six days, it does not have him anywhere even hint at this physical necessity which, if it really existed, could be relieved by resting on any other one day of the week just as well as it could be by resting upon the seventh day alone. Indeed, according to this declaration, no form of the sabbath is an institution at all. Like the evacuation of the bowels, the observance of the sabbath in any form is simply a physical necessity—an ordinary call of nature—and no such physical necessity—such call of nature—can ever be regarded as a religious institution. No attention to such a call of nature can ever be regarded as a religious ceremony or duty. It can never be regarded as a form of religious worship. It can never be regarded as a commemoration of the rest of the Creator on the seventh day of creation, of the release of the Hebrews from bondage in Egypt, of the peculiar union into which God entered with the Hebrews, of the resurrection of Jesus, or of anything else. The evacuation of the bowels is just as much a religious ceremony, or duty—just as much a mode of religious worship—just as much a commemoration of God's rest, etc., as is the observance of the sabbath, if, indeed, like the evacuation of the bowels, that observance be simply an ordinary call of nature—a physical necessity.

This declaration, however, is simply a hackneyed and absurd falsehood—an insult to every intelligent person, put forth by priestcraft for want of an argument. It is not

true that men are so constituted, physically, that they need to rest one day in every seven. It is a well-known historical fact that many nations, among which this period of rest was either entirely unknown or totally disregarded, have been noted for the fine physical development and power of the individuals composing them. Men are simply so constituted, physically, that they need to *rest* whenever they happen to be *weary*; and every man can best judge for himself *when* he needs to *rest*, and *how long*.

If the declaration in question were true—if the sabbath actually were a mere call of nature—then, like digestion, the secretion of bile, the evacuation of the bowels, etc., it should evidently be treated of by physiologists and in medical works, and not by theologians and in religious works. Besides this, if the sabbath really were simply a periodic call of nature, then, like all other such calls, it would be entirely under the control of the laws of nature. It would be no more capable of being controlled by human laws than is the action of the stomach, the liver, the lungs, or the bowels. Every man would have a period peculiar to himself, and, at the end of that period, his natural call for rest would come on just the same without the intervention of human laws that it would with them. In this case, it would be just as reasonable to attempt, by means of human laws, to make all men's bowels move at the same moment and to evacuate the same amount of waste matter, as it would be to attempt, by similar laws, to make all men's periodic call for rest fall upon the same day and require the same amount of rest. As you all well know, there is a natural periodic call or condition peculiar to women. But does that call or condition require the intervention of human laws? Is it not brought on, and is it not observed just the same, without the intervention of such laws that it would be with them? Could any human laws ever so control that periodic call or condition as to make it, in all women, fall upon the *same day* and last for the *same length of time*?

Besides all these things, men require regularity and uniformity in labor and rest, the same as in food, in dress, and in all other things. They do not require a full amount of any of these things for just six days, and then none at all on the seventh day. It would be just as reasonable, right, and proper, therefore, for the church to interfere and compel them to go entirely without either food or clothing on Sunday as it is for her to interfere and compel them to go without the physical exercise which they need just as much on that day as on any other. If a man's own judgment can be trusted in regard to his food and his dress, can it not also, with equal safety, be trusted in regard to his labor and his rest? And is not any interference on the part of the priesthood or others, in the latter case, just as great an outrage upon his individual rights and dignity as would be a similar interference in the former case? Let slaves hug this priest-made, this priest-paying sabbatical chain to their bosoms, if they will; but, from me, away with it!

LECTURE EIGHTEENTH.

THE GOD OF THE BIBLE.

IN regard to the God of the Bible, the old God of the Hebrews, who has been adopted by the Christians, and who, both by the Jews and the Christians, is assumed to be the Creator and the Supreme Ruler of the universe, I propose to prove the following ten facts: 1. That he was once nothing more than the tutelary divinity of the Hebrew Nation alone; 2. that he once had a material body like that of a man; 3. that he was once limited in his presence, in his knowledge, in his power, and in his goodness; 4. that he was once subject to human wants, infirmities, appetites, and passions; 5. that, in all his actions, he was once wont to be governed entirely by purely human motives; 6. that he was the source of all evil; 7. that he often broke his most solemn promises, practiced deception, required and accepted human sacrifices, and did other wicked acts; 8. that he often encouraged, and sometimes positively commanded, lying, robbery, slavery, polygamy, concubinage, common prostitution or whoredom, and murder; 9. that he was once accustomed to pardon, by contract, a certain amount of sins in return for a certain amount of roast beef, roast mutton, etc., of which he was very fond, and occasionally in return for human sacrifices; 10. that, in consequence of all these things, he could not have been the Creator of the universe, and cannot now be its Supreme Ruler. All of these things, I propose to prove by the testimony of the Bible itself and that of its

champions. Since the same passages, by which I shall prove one of these facts, will frequently also prove several of the others, I shall not attempt to prove the facts separately. Having, in my three lectures upon the creation, sufficiently analyzed this God as the assumed Creator of the universe, I shall, in the present lecture, analyze him only as its assumed Supreme Ruler.

“If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve : and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. . . . If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master’s and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children ; I will not go out free : then his master shall bring him unto the judges : he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post ; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl ; and he shall serve him forever” (Ex. xxi, 2-6). From this, we learn that God approved slavery—even the abominable slavery of brethren to their brethren. We also learn that a brutal slave, who cared nothing for his wife and children, was rewarded for his brutality by being permitted to abandon them and to go out free at the end of six years ; while the good and loving husband and father, who could not bear the thought of thus abandoning his dear ones, was punished for his goodness and affection, by having his ear bored through with an awl and by being made a slave forever. And the author of this abominable law was the God that you have adopted, that you now worship, and that you declare is utterly unchangeable. If, then, this your adopted God, who is bound to still approve such slavery, should conclude to have you, who are so unfortunate as to be very poor, sold, as slaves, for six years, to your more fortunate brethren, and if, at the end of that time, he should compel you to abandon forever your wives and your little ones, or to have your ears bored through with awls, and yourselves made slaves forever, what would you think of

his conduct? And yet would this treatment be any worse if inflicted upon yourselves than it was when, for a similar misfortune, it was inflicted upon equally good and loving Hebrew husbands and fathers? Do you really believe that the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe was ever guilty of acts so unspeakably abominable?

“If a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do” (Ex. xxi, 7). “Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought into bondage already; neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and our vineyards” (Neh. v, 5). From these passages, we learn that God authorized fathers to sell their own children, especially their daughters, into slavery; and that, when thus made slaves, the daughters were not permitted to go out free, at the end of six years, as were the men servants. From these, and from the following passages, we also learn that if poor men, among God’s chosen people, did not pay their debts by voluntarily selling themselves or their children into slavery, God authorized their creditors, with whom he always took side, to seize them, or their children, or both, and make slaves of them. “And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; . . .” (Lev. xxv, 39). “Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord; and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen” (2 Kings iv, 1). What would you think of this God, whom you have adopted, and whom you declare to be “without parallax or shadow of turning,” should he now, as in former times, authorize men to sell their own children into slavery, and should he authorize your creditors to make slaves of you and your children?

Would you still sing his praises? If not, why do you sing them at all? Dare you say that he is any too good to do such things—that he is any better now than he was when he did do them?

“Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you. . . . And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, they shall be your bondmen *forever*” (Lev. xxv, 44–46). From this, we learn that God not only permitted his chosen people to traffic for gain in human beings, in the sons and daughters of their neighbors, but also actually commanded them to do so, and declared that the persons thus reduced to slavery should be “bondmen *forever*.” He certainly approved slavery, therefore, in its worst form, and fully intended that it should be practiced “*forever*.” He is certainly responsible for all the horrors and the abominations of slavery that have ever cursed those countries in which the teachings of the Bible have been accepted as of divine authority. The slave-holders of the Southern states were certainly correct when they claimed that, according to the plainest teachings of the Bible, slavery was an institution of divine origin; an institution, too, which, with God’s approbation, could never be abolished. They were certainly correct also when they charged those who were attempting the overthrow of slavery with fighting against God.

“I form light, and create darkness; I make peace and create *evil*” (Is. xlv, 7). From this, we learn that God is as much the Creator of *evil* as he is of *light* or of anything else. So in Amos iii, 6, “. . . shall there be *evil* in a city, and the *Lord* hath not done it?” God seemed surprised that the people should look upon any form of *evil* as having any other source than *himself*. “Shall we receive good

at the hand of God, and shall we not receive *evil*?" (Job ii, 10). Upon whom did Job look as the source of evil? "For the inhabitants of Maroth waited carefully for good: but *evil* came down from the *Lord* unto the gate of Jerusalem" (Mic. i, 12). If there had been no evil in God, could evil have thus come down from him? "And the Lord repented of the *evil* which he thought to do unto his people" (Ex. xxxiv, 14). Of necessity, that which God had "thought to do unto his people" must have been either a right or a wrong act. If it was a right act, then God repented of having thought to do that which was right. If it was a wrong act, then God had thought to do that which was wrong, and would have actually done that wrong, had not Moses shamed him out of his evil intention. Is such a being a safe and competent person to be the Supreme Ruler of the Universe?

"Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up *evil* against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor: and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun" (2 Sam. xii, 11). And now, let me ask, do you believe that the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe ever made and executed so unspeakably abominable a threat? If not, how can you worship, as the Supreme Ruler of the universe, a being who, if we are to believe the testimony of the Bible, actually did both make it and execute it? This atrocious threat was professedly made against David, with whom God was having a kind of lover's quarrel. Instead, however, of punishing the offender himself, God permitted him to live right on undisturbed in all his regal splendor, and, for the present, satisfied his vengeance by killing one of the offender's infant children. Having thus temporarily appeased his wrath, he fixed upon Absalom, one of David's own sons, as his instrument with which to execute his vile intentions against David's wives, who were not guilty of any offense at all. At that time, Absalom was a wonderfully handsome, noble, and manly

youth of nineteen, the idol of his father, the pride of the whole nation. Having, according to the chronology of the Bible, waited eleven years, for this lad to attain full manhood, God took possession of him, and, by almighty power, irresistibly led him to commit the unspeakably revolting act of publicly and forcibly lying with his father's wives—with his own step-mothers. In all that he did, Absalom was faithfully doing God's will, doing just what God made him do; and yet, after having thus forever blackened the previously fair name of this brave and noble young man, God had him and twenty thousand other men remorselessly butchered for no other offense than that of doing his own will; of doing that which, by his own almighty power, he made it utterly impossible for them not to do.

In this case, and in hundreds of other similar cases, without at all consulting their own wishes in regard to the matter, God, for the very vilest of purposes, arbitrarily disposed of the women and of their virtue to whomsoever he pleased. And now, let me ask, what would the pure women of our own time—the faithful wives and fond mothers who now worship this same God, all unchanged as he is—think of him, if, to spite their husbands, he should have *them* thus forcibly dragged to the *top* of a *house*, and have *them* there, in open day, right before one another's faces, thus *ravished*, in the sight of thousands of eager spectators? How would my good orthodox *brethren* like to have this their adopted God treat their *own wives*, their *own mothers*, their *own sisters*, and their *own daughters* in this same horribly outrageous manner? And was not his conduct just as abominable, on the occasion in question, when performed upon other equally good and pure women, as it would be if performed upon *our own women*; and is he any better *now* than he was *then*? Is not the cause of virtue greatly injured by teachings so blasphemous concerning God? Will the worshipers of such a God ever try to be any better than is the God himself?

“And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah” (2 Sam. xxiv, 1). David did as God moved him to do, and then, to punish him for his obedience, God killed 70,000 innocent people. What could be more horrible in its cruelty or detestable in its injustice? What harm was there in David’s taking a census of the people, especially when God himself moved him to take it? And admitting that the act was a wicked one, why did God suffer David, the only offender, to escape all punishment, and wreak his vengeance on 70,000 innocent persons? Was the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe ever guilty of conduct so monstrous?

“And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons and his daughters, and his oxen and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger” (Josh. vii, 24–26). It seems that this Achan had, for his own use, concealed a portion of the plunder which Joshua and his band of robbers, God’s peculiar people, had taken in one of their marauding expeditions. For this act, God did not, at first, have Achan himself punished. He simply had thirty-six innocent persons slain. The slaying of these persons made known the fact that he was angry about something, and led to an investigation which resulted in the discovery that Achan was the man for whose offense these men had been slain. Joshua then treacherously prevailed upon Achan to make confession of his crime, if crime it could be called. The nineteenth verse says: “And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel,

and make confession unto him ; and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it not from me." Achan did make confession, and then, together with his innocent children, his sheep, his oxen, and his asses, he was cruelly stoned to death and then burned.

Thus you see that, because one of the plunderers kept back a garment and a little gold, the God that you worship caused to be brutally butchered thirty-six innocent persons, an entire family of innocent children, and a large number of poor dumb brutes. And this is only one of many instances in which, for some trifling offense, committed by some other party, God caused to be put to death a number of innocent men, women, and children as well as harmless dumb brutes. And yet the champions of the Bible have the effrontery to declare that this monster, all unchanged, is the Supreme Ruler of the universe, and that he is infinite in justice and in mercy. If you wish to do so, you may sing the praises of such a God, but as for me, I can see nothing in him worthy of praise. I would rather praise the devil, who was never guilty of conduct half so atrocious.

"And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and I gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah ; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things " (2 Sam. xii, 8). At the time mentioned, David, to whom all these things were given, already had a harem well filled with wives and concubines. Instead, however, of reproving him for his polygamous practices, God, we see, encouraged and aided him to indulge in them upon a larger scale by thus making him a present of a whole houseful more of wives all at one time. These women were the widows of Saul, who was one of David's many fathers-in-law. Of course, then, the women were all David's own mothers-in-law. Their own wishes in regard to this wholesale transfer of themselves, as so much property, to their own son-in-law, were never consulted. This, however, was probably the best method

of disposing of mothers-in-law. At any rate, it was *God's* method. If our ungodly laws would only permit them to do so, the champions of the Bible, as a rule, would doubtless get rid of their own mothers-in-law by this divine method; by thus taking those charming women as wives to their own godly bosoms and to their own virtuous beds.

When God was thus aiding and encouraging the practice of polygamy and concubinage, he must, of necessity, have regarded these practices as either right or wrong; and since, according to the unanimous testimony of all his worshipers, he never changes, he must, of equal necessity, regard them now just as he regarded them then. If, therefore, he then regarded them as right, he must, of necessity, still regard them as equally right. And if he regards them as right, are they not bound to be right? Dare the champions of the Bible charge him with being deceived in regard to the nature of these practices? Dare they claim that they know any better than does he what is right and what is wrong? If not, how dare they condemn, in the Mormons and others, these practices which he has always aided and encouraged? If, on the other hand, at the time of which we are speaking, he regarded these practices as wrong, then he undeniably aided and encouraged his worshipers to indulge, to the fullest extent, in practices which he himself believed to be wrong, and which, consequently, must have actually been wrong. Without a decided change, therefore, for the better—and the champions of the Bible do not claim any such change—he is bound to be still equally inclined to aid and encourage his worshipers to indulge in these, and in other wicked practices. One or the other of these conclusions is inevitable, and, in either case, his whole mighty influence is undeniably on the side of the grossest immorality.

“And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms. . . . So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son” (Hos. i, 2, 3). Further on,

we learn that this woman “ of whoredoms ” bore Hosea two other children, and that he then grew weary of her, quarreled with her, called her by foul names, threatened to strip her naked in the street, and drove her from his house. That he was living with her in a state of open whoredom, without any pretense of marriage, we learn from the second and the fourth verses of the next chapter : “ Plead with your mother, plead ; for she is not my *wife*, neither am I her *husband*. . . . And I will not have mercy upon her children ; for they be the children of *whoredoms*.” The children to whom this holy old brute of a prophet was thus speaking, and upon whom he declared that he would not have any mercy, were his own children, begotten and born, as he declared, in the most shameful whoredom. Would not this holy man’s indignation at Gomer’s shameful conduct have appeared to better advantage, if he had not himself been, for many years, her equally lewd paramour ? Why did he see nothing wrong in her conduct—nothing displeasing to himself, until after she had borne him several children, and her beauty had somewhat faded ? May it not be that he already had his libidinous eyes upon a younger and handsomer woman “ of whoredoms,” and that he quarreled with Gomer for the express purpose of getting rid of her, and of thus making room in his holy bed for this other lewd woman ? Be this as it may, he certainly did, almost immediately, take to his godly embrace another woman of notoriously lewd character. “ Then said the Lord unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an *adulteress*. . . . So I *bought* her to me [that is, paid her harlot’s fees] for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley : and I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days ; thou shalt not play the harlot [until I have received, in sexual enjoyment, the full value of the “ fifteen pieces of silver, and an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley,” which I have advanced], and thou shalt not be for another man : so [until my “ many days ” of time is out

with thee] will I also be for thee" (Hos. iii, 1-3). What a love of a Lord that was! How wonderfully kind to Hosea he was in thus furnishing him a lewd woman whenever he perceived that this holy man wanted one! If he is so kind to my opponents—and who knows but that he often may be so, upon the sly?—we can easily understand why they praise him so much. With what refreshing simplicity this holy man of God tells us how much he paid as fees to this prostitute, and that, by thus prudently paying in advance, he had her all to himself for "many days!"

In 2 Tim. iii, 16, Paul says: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." These bawdy-house accounts of Hosea's libidinous adventures, which I stoop to notice only that I may expose them, constitute a portion of the God-inspired scriptures to which Paul refers. But what reproof, what correction, what instruction in righteousness, do we receive from these accounts? If anybody is reproofed or corrected by them, who can it be, unless it be those persons who have the impious audacity to condemn the *God-approved*, the *God-commanded* practice of *prostitution*? If anybody is instructed in righteousness by them, who can it be, unless it be those holy men—and there are many such—who, on the *sly*, deal in that form of *righteousness* which, *openly*, they stigmatize as *prostitution*, *whoredom*, etc.? These holy men may, indeed, and doubtless often do, learn, from Hosea's prudent example, to *pay in advance*, and to thus secure *all to themselves* the undisturbed possession of the *prostitutes* for "*many days*." Can the champions of the Bible mention anything *else* that can possibly be learned from these inspired scriptures?

If God regarded the cohabiting thus with common hired prostitutes as right in Hosea's time, how must he, utterly unchangeable as he is in his views and in all other things, regard similar conduct on the part of his worshipers of the present time? Can he regard it as otherwise

than right? And while they know that he regards it as right, will his worshipers be likely to regard it as wrong, and will they be likely to avoid the practice of it? In this case, is not his whole influence entirely on the side of the most baneful form of immorality? If, on the other hand, he regarded such conduct as wrong, in Hosea's time, did not he himself command the practice of that which he believed to be wrong? And is not his whole influence, in this case, as in the other, entirely, on the side of immorality? Dare the champions of the Bible say that, since Hosea's time, his character has undergone any change for the better? If not, are they not bound to admit that he is still none too good to command his special favorites to indulge in similar wrong conduct, and that he probably does still occasionally so command them? Believing that their God is pleased with such immoralities, will not his worshipers inevitably incline to practice them just to please him? In any view of the case, can such blasphemous teachings concerning God have any other than a direct tendency to destroy, in the characters of those who accept them, all the principles of morality and virtue? Can we wonder that, with the Bible for their code of morals, all Christendom is reeking with immorality and vice?

“But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. ii, 17). Here God made a positive threat or promise which he certainly did never fulfil. In defiance of this unreasonable threat, Adam and Eve, to whom the threat was made, had the good sense and the pluck to eat all they wanted of the fruit thus so positively and so foolishly prohibited. This was the very fruit which God very well knew that they most greatly needed. When making it, and when making them, he very well knew, too, that they would eat it. Indeed, he put it right in their way in order that they might not fail to eat it. Had they failed to eat it, all his plans for the

future would have failed. There never would have been any fall of man, any redemption, any Redeemer, any apostles, any New Testament, any saints, any Christian Church, any hell, any purgatory, any remission of sins, or any profitable trade for priests. And yet, when that primitive pair thus defiantly ate the forbidden fruit in question, when they had thereby become "as gods, knowing good and evil," God did not kill them as he had so positively declared that he would. So far from dying, according to that declaration, on the very day on which they ate the fruit, they lived right on for nearly a thousand years, and then died, not from the effects of eating fruit, but of extreme old age. And when God made the promise or threat in question, he very well knew that he would never fulfil it. He very well knew that he did not intend ever to fulfil it. In making it, therefore, was he not guilty of telling a deliberate and wilful falsehood?

"Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live" (2 Kings xx, 1). This unconditional declaration was made to Hezekiah, who was very sick, and who had inquired of God what was to be the result of that sickness. Hezekiah, however, did not die at that time, as God thus so positively declared that he should. On the contrary, he recovered, and lived on for many more years. Here, then God was again guilty of making a positive assertion which proved to be false, and which, when he made it, he must have known to be false. So, in Jon. iii, 4, he spoke falsely when, in the most positive manner, he declared: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." This promise or threat was never executed; and, when making it, God very well knew that it would never be executed. Was he not, then, evidently guilty of a deliberate falsehood? What say the champions of the Bible?

In the fourteenth chapter of Numbers, God declares his intention to violate a sworn promise which he had made to the Hebrews. In the thirtieth verse, he says:

“Doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein.” God here admits that he had made a sworn promise to the people whom he was addressing to make them dwell in a certain land—a promise on the strength of which he had induced them to leave their comfortable homes in Egypt. Now, however, after having drawn them out into a terrible desert, in which they are utterly helpless, he declares, with a kind of fiendish exultation, that he intends to deliberately violate this solemn promise, and to cause them all to miserably perish in the desert. At the close of the thirty-fourth verse, he uses these fearfully significant words: “. . . and ye shall *know* my *breach* of *promise*.” And this horrible threat he actually executed. He actually did violate his sworn promise, and actually did destroy many hundreds of thousands of the poor deluded people who had trusted and followed him. And this he did simply because the people had believed the report of *his own messengers*—of the men whom *he himself* had sent out to spy out the land upon which, as a robber, he intended to seize, and who had brought back an unfavorable report concerning it. Since, at the time of making the promise in question, he must have foreknown that he would never fulfil it, he must, of necessity, have made it while intending to break it. While discoursing upon God’s promises, why do our preachers never notice this promise? And why do they teach that he *cannot lie*, when the Bible so plainly teaches that he *can*?

“I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand, and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall entice Ahab, king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one spake saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner. Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go out, and be a *lying spirit* in the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also pre-

vail: go out and do even so. Now therefore, behold, the *Lord* hath put a *lying spirit* in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the *Lord* hath spoken *evil* against thee" (2 Chron. xviii, 18-22).

It seems that God had a quarrel with Ahab, king of Israel, and wished to destroy him, but was unable to do so, unless he could entice him out of his stronghold at Samaria. God, therefore, resorted to the despicable means described in the passages above quoted. He sent out a professional *liar*, whom he had with him in heaven, and, by means of this person's skilfully-told *lies*, he actually did draw Ahab out from his stronghold, and actually did destroy him. The champions of the Bible, I suppose, would, of course, call this *Godly* lying, and would praise God all the more for having practiced it, or for having had it practiced by one of his worshipers in heaven. Indeed, many of these champions seem to be laboring faithfully to qualify themselves to serve him, when they reach heaven, in the same capacity in which this spirit so ably served him. Ahab's prophets were not to blame for what they said. Being inspired by God, or, at least, by an authorized agent of his, they evidently thought that they were telling the truth. It was not they that did the lying. It was God, or his agent, that did the lying through them. They were nothing more than mere instruments, and were as honest as were the prophets who were opposed to Ahab. These prophets were themselves thoroughly deceived by this *lie-loving God*, in whom, like yourselves, they implicitly trusted. From all this it is clear that your adopted God promptly resorted to *lying* whenever it suited his purposes to do so. And has he ever abandoned this monstrous practice? If he has, *when* did he abandon it, and *why*?

From these same passages, we also learn several other important facts. From the fact that he was *seen*, we learn that *God* was a *visible object*. From the fact that he was "*sitting* upon his throne," we learn that he had a *body*. He could not possibly have *sat* upon a throne, or upon any-

thing else, without a *body* with which to assume a sitting position. From the fact that he occupied a *throne*, we learn, further, that he was a *monarch*, and that, consequently, he was opposed to *free* or *republican institutions*. From the fact that there were hosts “standing on his *right hand*, and on his *left*,” we learn that he had *hands*, and that he was *limited* in his own *extent*. From the fact that he had to *inquire* what the heavenly professional liar in question proposed to do, we learn that he was *limited* in his own *knowledge*. From the fact that, in order to overcome a poor feeble mortal, he was compelled to resort to *lying*, we learn that he was *limited* in his own *power*. From the fact that he did resort to means so base as wholesale lying, to accomplish his monstrous purpose of murdering a number of his own children, we learn that he was *limited* in his own *goodness*. From the fact that he had a hard-faced professional *liar* with him in *heaven*, we learn that such *liars* go to *heaven* when they *die*. What a cheering thought this must be to many of my opponents! From the fact that he preferred the plan proposed by this hard-faced professional liar, to any of the plans proposed by any of his more honest worshipers, if he had any such in heaven, we learn that *liars* were very *influential* persons in heaven, and that God preferred to accomplish his difficult undertakings by means of *lying* rather than by any *other* means. Indeed, from the fact that he did not *call* for any plan except one by which Ahab could be *enticed* or *deceived* out of his strong position, we learn that, from the very first, God proposed to deal in *deception alone*. Finally, from the fact that, in this whole affair, he acted just as a *mean*, *cowardly*, and *treacherous man* would be likely to act, under similar circumstances, we learn that, in his character, God resembled a *mean*, *cowardly*, and *treacherous man*. I am aware that these are all very hard conclusions, and yet I defy my opponents, by fair and logical arguments, based upon the passages of scripture in question, to arrive at any other conclusions.

“Then said I, Ah, Lord God! surely thou hast greatly *deceived* this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul” (Jer. iv, 10). Had the Lord thus “deceived this people,” or did he simply inspire Jeremiah to lie when he declared that the people had been thus deceived? “O Lord, thou hast *deceived* me, and I was *deceived*” (Jer. xx, 7). Had the Lord thus deceived Jeremiah, or did he simply again inspire that lachrymose old prophet to declare a lie? He certainly must have done the one or the other. Jeremiah, who seems to have been a really honest man, evidently looked upon this Lord God with a great deal of suspicion, and with very little reverence. At another time, in language far more forcible and familiar than reverential and polite, he called this mendaciously-inclined Lord God to account as follows: “Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a *liar*?” (Jer. xv, 18.) At still another time, he exhorted this Lord God to refrain from disgraceful conduct, to keep his sworn promises, like a gentleman, and to try and be a respectable God. “Do not abhor us, for thy name’s sake, do not *disgrace* the *throne* of thy *glory*: remember, *break not* thy *covenant* with us” (Jer. xiv, 21). Jeremiah evidently believed that God was in a fair way to become “*altogether . . . as a liar*.” He also evidently believed that, if not dissuaded from doing so, by the earnest exhortations of his advisers, he was almost sure to “*disgrace the throne*” of his *glory*, to *break* his *covenant* with the people, and to do other acts unworthy of a God, or even of a gentleman.

“And if the prophet be *deceived* when he hath spoken a thing, *I the Lord* have *deceived* that prophet” (Ezek. xiv, 9). Of necessity, this language must be either true or false. If true, then God actually did deceive the prophets. If false, then, since “all scripture is given by inspiration of God,” he certainly inspired Ezekiel, in this case, to write a lie. In either case, what kind of a being is he, and what kind of a book is the Bible?

From the first chapter of Exodus, we learn that God

rewarded two midwives, Shiprah and Puah, for lying to Pharaoh concerning the birth of Hebrew children. From several succeeding chapters, we learn that God also instructed Moses to lie to Pharaoh, by telling him that the Hebrews simply wished to go out a three days' journey, to hold a kind of religious festival or camp-meeting, whereas they really meant to run entirely away and never come back at all. We also learn that God instructed Moses to lie to the Egyptians in regard to their clothing, their jewelry, and their other valuables, which God wished his chosen people, the Hebrews, to possess. Moses faithfully followed these instructions of his God, and lyingly told the Egyptians that the Hebrews simply wished to *borrow* these goods, for a few days only, whereas they had really already made arrangements to abscond from the country with these things, and never return them at all. If, on this occasion, God was *unwilling* to supply his peculiar people with clothing, jewelry, etc., by honest means, was he not woefully wanting in *goodness*? If he was *unable* to supply them with these things by honest means, was he not woefully wanting in *power*? The fact that he did not supply them with these things by honest means is proof positive that he was woefully wanting in the one or the other of these essential attributes of true deity. Which, then, did he lack, *goodness* or *power*? And could he thus lack either of these attributes and not be, as a God, a most woful failure?

From the second chapter of Joshua, we learn that God rewarded a certain woman by the name of Rahab for lying to her neighbors, the inhabitants of Jericho, concerning the Hebrew spies whom she was concealing in her house. This woman was a harlot or common prostitute, and this fact probably explains why it was that, during their stay in Jericho, God's messengers made her house their stopping-place. "Birds of a feather," etc.

When God wished Samuel to go to Bethlehem to anoint David king of Israel to succeed Saul, who by an act of hu-

manity shown to a captured king had offended God, Samuel was afraid to go ; afraid that Saul would put him to death. God, therefore, instructed Samuel to go with a base lie in his mouth ; to take with him a heifer, and to falsely pretend that he had come for no other purpose than to offer a sacrifice unto the Lord. These facts, we learn from 1 Sam. xvi, 1-5.

In the eighth and the ninth chapters of Romans, we find the following passages : “For whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified : and whom he justified, them he also glorified. . . . For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. [What a craver he was of notoriety!] Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. . . . Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction : and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the gentiles?” In Eph. i, 4, Paul also says : “According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” In 2. Thess. ii, 13, Paul still further says : “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.”

From these, and a vast number of other similar pas-

sages, we learn that, before the foundation of the world, God unchangeably predestinated a certain portion of the human race to eternal salvation, and all the balance to eternal damnation. We also learn that he exerts such an influence upon all men that not an individual of them can possibly escape his predestinated destiny, and that every individual of them shall seem to deserve, and to be fitted for, the particular destiny to which he is thus predestinated. We learn that, to those whom he has predestinated to salvation, he gives power to believe certain absurd doctrines, such as that a certain God is his own father and his own son, that one God is three Gods, and that three Gods are only one God, etc.; and that, although he has already unchangeably predestinated them to certain salvation, he then pretends that he saves them because of their belief in these absurd doctrines. He thus makes them seem to merit the salvation to which he has predestinated them, and to be fitted for it. We also learn that, from those whom he has predestinated to damnation, he either withholds all power to believe those absurd doctrines, or else manufactures a lie and makes them believe it, and that, although their several dooms have all been unchangeably fixed since before the foundation of the world, he then pretends that he damns them, some because they have not believed the absurd doctrines in question, and the rest because they have believed the lie which he himself manufactured for them and made them believe. All of this is abominably partial and unfair. Since, like mere machines, those who are predestinated to salvation are simply *made* to believe, their faith cannot possibly be any *merit* on their own part. So, on the other hand, the unbelief, in an absurdly so-called truth, on the part of some of those who have been eternally doomed to damnation, and the belief on the part of the balance in a God-prepared lie, cannot possibly involve any *demerit* on the part of the respective subjects of them, since, like mere machines, all of these persons are, by God's own almighty power, *made to be* just

what they *are*. Just as reasonably might God damn us for not flying, when he has given us no power to fly, as to damn us for not believing certain absurd and incredible doctrines, when he has given us no power to believe them. We would all gladly fly, if we could, and, if we could, we would all just as gladly believe all that it is necessary to believe in order to attain salvation. So of those who are made to believe a lie. It would be just as reasonable for God to make them blind, and then to damn them for being so, as it is for him to make them believe a lie, and then to damn them for believing it. Why not damn us at once without all this silly effort to make us seem to merit such a doom? Will God ever give saving faith to any one whom, before the foundation of the world, he predestinated to eternal damnation? If not, why mock these unfortunate creatures by calling upon them to believe?

But does God, you ask, *make* certain persons believe a lie? Paul declares that he certainly does, and that he does it, too, for the express purpose of thereby securing a *seeming excuse* for inflicting upon them the *damnation* to which he has already long since unchangeably predestinated them; the damnation which they would have had to endure all the same if this pretended *excuse* had never been *invented*. "And for this cause God shall send them *strong delusion*, that they should *believe a lie* [and he will do this expressly in order], that they might all be *damned*" . . . [and that they might all seem to deserve to "be damned"] (2 Thess. ii, 11-12). This makes the case a very clear one, and, at the same time, makes God a thousand times worse than the devil.

In order that these truly unfortunate people may, without fail, "*believe a lie*," they must of necessity, *have* a suitable *lie furnished* them to *believe*. Without such a *lie* for them to *believe*, the "*strong delusion*" in question would evidently be an utter failure. But who is to furnish them the *lie*? Who possibly could furnish it, except *God himself*? He alone foreknew that there was ever to be any

such *lie*, and that it was *ever* to be *believed*; and he could not possibly have foreknown these things unless he had himself predetermined to infallibly *prepare* that *lie*.

Since the elect were infallibly chosen to salvation, before the foundation of the world, their salvation evidently does not depend upon anything meritorious in themselves. They attain salvation simply because, millions of ages before they were born, God made it utterly impossible for them not to attain it. So of the non-elect. Since the doom of damnation was unchangeably fixed upon them, millions of ages before they were born, their damnation evidently does not depend upon anything demeritorious in themselves. They are damned simply because God made them for the express purpose of damning them; simply because he has made it utterly impossible for them not to be damned.

I have heard certain champions of the Bible try to justify God's act of damning these unfortunate persons in advance of their creation, by claiming that he damns them on account of the sins which he foresees that they are to commit after they are created. This, however, is not the teaching of the Bible. It plainly teaches that God forms these persons expressly for damnation, just as a potter forms certain vessels expressly for dishonorable uses. The Bible teaches, too, that God has a perfect right to thus make men for the sole purpose of damning them. Besides this, how can God possibly foresee that certain sins are to be committed by certain persons, not yet born, unless he himself unchangeably predetermines that those very sins inevitably shall be committed by those very persons. If those persons possibly could avoid committing those sins which he foresees that they are to commit, they probably would avoid committing them. In this case, however, the events which God professes to foresee would never occur at all, and his pretended foresight would reduce to extremely poor guessing. Does he not, then, of necessity, just as much predetermine the acts and the re-

spective characters of these various persons as he predestines their existence and their final destiny? Is it not an undeniable fact that whoever ultimately lands in hell does so simply because God has made him expressly for that particular destiny, and has made it utterly impossible for him to attain any other? This makes God a thousand times worse than the devil was ever represented to be, since it makes God, who could do otherwise, spend a great portion of his time in making men for the express purpose of seeing them writhe, for ever and ever, in the unutterable torments of fire and brimstone, while the devil, who is himself also helplessly suffering these same terrible torments, simply receives those whom God makes for him, and forwards to his fearfully fiery dominions. This is, undeniably, the most horribly blasphemous doctrine ever taught among men. There is, however, no doctrine more clearly taught in the Bible, and, so long as the Bible continues to be accepted as good authority on such subjects, my Presbyterian friends, and others who advocate this horribly blasphemous doctrine, need have no fear that it can ever be overturned.

But who are those persons whom God is thus, by "strong delusion," irresistibly leading to "believe a lie that they all might be damned?" What assurance have my orthodox opponents that they are not the very persons who are thus deluded, and thus booked for eternal damnation? Would it not be just as fair, and just as proper, for God to thus delude *them* into believing a lie, "that *they* all might be damned," as it would be for him to thus delude *anybody else* into believing the *same thing* for the *same purpose*? Indeed, by reading the whole chapter from which I have quoted, you will clearly perceive that the language in question cannot be applied, as many would like to apply it, to infidels or unbelievers. These are all to be damned, it is true, but, as we elsewhere learn, their damnation is to administered, ostensibly, because they have not believed anything at all, and not, like that of the

persons whose case is now under consideration, because they have believed a lie.

Paul describes those to whom he applies the language in question as sitting in the temple of God, claiming to be the people of God, and arrogating to themselves many of the powers and the prerogatives of God. He describes them further as a portion of the Christian Church who are to fall away from that Church and to corrupt themselves by the adoption of false doctrines and the indulgence in wicked practices; but who, nevertheless, are to claim to be the true Church, and are to be loud and arrogant professors of religion.

These unfortunate victims, then, of God's "strong delusion," must, of necessity, constitute some church organization. All theologians admit this fact, and differ in opinion only when they attempt to fix upon the particular sect or division of the Church that are being thus so scandalously deluded and damned. Though they all think it a glorious thing for any other sect to be thus treacherously tricked and damned, yet, for obvious reasons, none of them like to undergo those interesting operations themselves.

All theologians agree that it will not do to fix upon some small and obscure sect, since Paul describes the falling away as a very great one. They all agree that the description cannot be filled by anything less than the entire Catholic, or the entire Protestant division of the Christian Church. As a matter of course, therefore, the Catholics boldly claim, and, indeed, quite clearly prove, that the Protestants correspond exactly to the description given by Paul of those who were to fall away from the Church, and who were then to be so atrociously tricked and damned by the God whom they professed to serve. On the other hand, equally as a matter of course, the Protestants return this truly characteristic Christian compliment by just as boldly claiming, and just as clearly proving, the same things in regard to the Catholics. For my own part, I suspect that both parties are correct—that both Catholics and Protest-

ants are being basely deluded into believing a lie—"that they all might be damned." Should my view of the matter prove to be correct, then we will all be damned together; some of us for what we do believe, and the balance for what we do not believe. In any view of the case, those who escape damnation are bound to be very few and far between. Since God is professedly a deluder, no man can have any assurance that his own religious faith is not a "strong delusion," sent upon him by God as a pretext for damning him. In view of all these things, then, let us all prepare to be damned.

In the twentieth chapter of Ezekiel, God declares that, for a pretext to render his people desolate, he gave them "statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live;" and that he "polluted them," and caused them to burn their own children as sacrifices upon the altar. To assert that the Supreme Ruler of the Universe—the sum of all the forces eternally inherent in matter—ever did any such things as these, is to assert something so supremely absurd, and so monstrously blasphemous, that it requires no further notice.

"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" (Gen. iii, 8, 9.) This is a plain historical statement, in which figurative language would evidently be entirely inadmissible. The entire statement is bound to be either literally true, or literally false. If it be literally true—and the champions of the Bible will hardly claim that it is literally false—then, since God had a voice, audible to the natural or physical sense of hearing, he must, of necessity, have possessed physical organs of speech. Since he was walking, he must have had feet and legs to walk with, and a body to keep these organs in their place. Since, for his walk, he chose "the cool of the day," it is evident that he

wished to avoid the heat of the day as too oppressive. In this matter, he clearly exhibited a human, or, at least, a physical weakness. Finally, since he was walking about inside of the garden, he must, of necessity, have been less in extent than the garden, and, of equal necessity, all that portion of the universe which lay outside of the garden must have been totally destitute of his presence. Indeed, from the fact that "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, among the trees of the garden," it is evident that he was present in only a portion even of the garden.

Since Adam alone was expected to dress this entire garden and keep it in order, it could not have been a very large one. Inside of this small garden, however, Adam and his naughty little wife managed to successfully hide themselves from the Lord's presence. In order to do this, they had, of necessity, to be where he was not present; and, of equal necessity, their place of concealment had to be unknown to him. Had he been present where they were hidden, they would not have been hidden from his presence; and, had he known where they then were, they would not have been hidden from him at all. It is not said that they tried to hide from him, but that they actually did so hide; and that, in order to find them, he was under the necessity of calling to them. Here, then, both God's presence and his knowledge were confined within very narrow limits.

In Ex. xxxi, 17, we read: " . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he *rested* and was *refreshed*." Had he not been *weary*, he could not possibly have thus *rested* and been *refreshed*. Here, then, we again have positive proof that God was subject to a human or an animal infirmity, weariness, and that, like men and other animals, he required rest and refreshment. And dare my opponents claim that a person like this, possessed of a body, and thus subject to animal

wants and infirmities, can be the infinite force that holds the planets in their orbits, the universe in its order?

“And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord *smelled* a *sweet savor*; and the Lord said in his *heart*, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake” (Gen. viii, 20, 21). From the fact that God said certain things “in his *heart*,” we learn that he certainly *had* a *heart*; and from the fact that he “*smelled* a *sweet savor*,” the material odors of roast meats, we learn that he had a *nose* to *smell with*, and that his olfactories were acted upon by the *same agencies* that act upon the olfactories of *men* and of the *lower animals*. Indeed, the Bible plainly teaches that the design, and the only design, of the burnt-offerings, formerly offered to God, was, by sending up to his place of abode “a sweet savor,” to gratify his *sense* of *smell*, and to thus put him into a sufficiently good humor to pardon the sins of the people, and to complacently do their bidding generally. With their roast meats, they then bribed or bamboozled him into serving them, just as we now, with our extravagant flatteries, bribe or bamboozle him into serving ourselves.

“If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil which I purpose to do unto them, because of the evil of their doings” (Jon. iii, 10). Here we have God represented as being in doubt as to whether the people of whom he was speaking would, or would not, repent; and this uncertainty on his part, in regard to that matter, clearly proves that he was not, as the champions of the Bible claim that he now is, absolutely omniscient. On the contrary, it clearly proves that, in regard to knowledge, he was not at all superior to a man of ordinary intelligence. He proposed to repent, provided those people would repent first; and he proposed to do evil, because they had already done evil. From this, we learn that his actions were controlled,

not by infinite wisdom, but by the actions of wicked men. In repenting, he displayed a purely human weakness ; and, in proposing to do evil simply because man had done evil, he displayed a lamentable want of goodness, and an exceedingly base human motive. Do you really believe that the infinite sum of all the forces that constitute the laws of nature, that constitute the Supreme Ruler of the universe, ever thus displayed so purely human a weakness, so purely human, so exceedingly base, a motive.

From the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, we learn that, in a sudden fit of jealousy, God worked himself up into an uncontrollable fury, and then declared that, without any distinction of age, sex, or condition, he would mercilessly destroy all his people whom he had so often and so solemnly sworn to protect. When, however, his special favorite and adviser, Moses, had reasoned with him upon this subject, and had shown him the disgraceful nature of his proposed course of conduct, the unpopularity which, by that course, he would bring upon himself, he concluded to break his word, and to back down from this proposed wholesale slaughter of his people. He did not thus back down, however, because of the enormity of his proposed crime. Of that enormity, he seemed to be totally unconscious, or utterly callous. He backed down simply from *fear*; from fear that, if he should commit the atrocious crime proposed, his enemies would make *fun* of him, and claim to themselves the honor (?) of his atrocious act. Hear him : "I said I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men. Were it not that I *feared* the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high and the Lord hath not done this " (Deut. xxxii, 26-27). From this, it is evident that, if he could have been sure that he should himself receive the honor (?) of the proposed destruction of his people, he would certainly have destroyed them. I do not know which was the more abominable,

the atrocious *crime* which he proposed to commit, or the despicable *cowardice* which alone prevented him from committing it. On various other occasions, he fell into similar fits of jealous fury, and, in the most positive manner, declared that he would utterly destroy all his chosen rascals, and choose an entirely new set. On each of these occasions, however, Moses, who was undeniably the greatest rascal of them all, and who seems to have been at all times more than a match for him in argument, who seems, too, by a truly strange coincidence, to have been the only person ever present on any of these occasions, succeeded in shaming him out of his proposed vengeance. This, Moses did, by representing to him what his enemies would say of conduct so inexpressibly atrocious. And dare the champions of the Bible claim that this furiously jealous, this weak-reasoning, this promise-breaking coward was then, and still is, the Supreme Ruler of the universe?

In the twentieth chapter of Ezekiel, God refers to these events, and again declares that it was only from the *fear* of being *disgraced* in the eyes of his *enemies*, that he backed down from executing his oft-repeated and unconditional threat to destroy his rebellious and rascally people. He then goes on to say that, being afraid to execute this threat, he had sworn to take vengeance on his people in some other way. He also informs us that, in order to have a pretext for what he proposed to do to them, he had himself caused them to commit many wicked acts. "Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live: and I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate [Why did he wish to make them desolate?] to the end that they might know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. xx, 25, 26). Was not this a rather strange method by which to convince them that he was the Lord? Could he not have convinced them of this in a less cruel way?

In Ex. xxxiii, 3, we read : “ . . . for I will not go up in the midst of thee : for thou art a stiff-necked people : lest I consume thee in the way.” Here God is represented not only as being limited in his presence, but also as being afraid to trust himself with his people—afraid lest, in one of his frequent fits of fearful fury, he might entirely lose control of himself and murder them all. I do not know which was more to be pitied, this poor insane God, or the unfortunate people who were constantly exposed to his insane fury. “Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them” (Ps. cvi, 23). Here this poor inefficient God is represented as very frankly admitting that he was entirely under the control of his favorite, Moses.

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it : but I found none. Therefore, have I poured out mine indignation upon them : I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath” (Ezek. xxii, 30, 31). From this, it is clear that, in his frequent fits of frantic fury, this unfortunate God had no power to control himself ; that he did not really wish to destroy the people in question, and that he tried hard to find some one to play Moses with him—some one to coax him not to be so naughty ; but that, finding no such person, he actually had committed the horrible deed which he mentions, and which he had so earnestly hoped that some man, more powerful than himself, would prevent him from committing. Poor, insane God ! What a monstrous character his own inspired writings give him ! With such a God, I would not exchange places.

In all these cases, God is represented as being subject to uncontrollable fits of anger, jealousy, fury, fear, etc.—all of them the lowest of human passions—and as saying and doing things far worse than were ever said or done by the most despicable of human tyrants. Notwithstanding

all this, however, Moses, according to his own account, could, at all times, and under all circumstances, lead this fearfully passionate God hither and thither at pleasure, and, with the utmost ease, vanquish him in every argument. And now, let me ask, could any man thus completely control the action of the illimitable and inconceivably glorious power that constitutes the Supreme Ruler of the Universe—the force that sustains, in all of their unspeakably sublime revolutions, the billicns of billions of mighty worlds and systems of worlds that crowd every portion of infinite space? Dare my opponents claim that this infinitely mighty and glorious power or force ever goes into sudden and uncontrollable fits of anger, jealousy, fury, fear, etc.? Dare they claim that it ever takes walks in gardens, regales itself upon the savory odors of roast meats, breaks its solemn promises, commits wholesale murders, etc.? Who, unless he be a fool that cannot reason, a coward that dare not reason, or a bigot that will not reason—who, I ask, will hesitate to answer that this infinitely great and glorious power never does, and never did do, any of these things? What, then, is this old, angry, jealous, furious, bloodthirsty, and yet cowardly being—this man-controlled, beef-loving, promise-breaking, weak-reasoning God of the Bible, except an old priest-invented, priest-paying pagan myth—a monstrous remnant of primitive superstition and ignorance?

In the thirty-second chapter of Genesis, we learn that God, in a material body like that of a man, had a “rough-and-tumble” wrestling match with Jacob, who, notwithstanding he was over a hundred years of age, was more than a match for this materialized God. From this, we learn that God has a body, like that of a man, and a very weak body at that. From the fact that he did not know who Jacob was, until Jacob had told him, we learn that his knowledge was not superior to that of a man; and from the fact that, after his defeat, he wanted to go away from Jacob, we learn that, at that time, he was not present

anywhere else in the universe. How, then, did the universe manage to run while he was thus absent from it?

“I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know” (Gen. xviii, 21). Here God is represented as being limited, both in his presence and his knowledge. In the first part of this same chapter, he is represented as having a body exactly like that of a man, as having been mistaken for a man, and as having, like a hungry man, eaten, at Abraham’s table, a substantial meal of bread, meat, milk, etc. He is also represented as being weary from walking, as having dirty feet, etc., and as resting himself in the shade of a tree; as being, in short, in every respect, like a man. If, then, his body was not a real body, composed, like that of a man, of flesh, blood, bones, and other forms of matter, what kind of body was it, and how was it able to contain the real food which he then ate? Besides this, when he changed himself back into an invisible spirit, if, indeed, he really did thus change himself, what became of the substantial food which he had just eaten? Did it all drop down in a mass upon the ground, just as he had eaten it, or did it also change into spirit, and, like himself, become invisible? Did the infinite power that rules the universe ever thus assume the body of a man? Was it ever thus weary from walking? Did it ever thus rest itself in the shade of a tree? Did it ever thus have dirty feet? Did it ever thus wash its feet? Did it ever thus fill its stomach with bread, meat, milk, etc.? Was it ever thus limited in its presence? In short, was it ever thus, to all intents and purposes, a mere man!

“And the Lord was with Judah; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountains; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron” (Jud. i, 19). Could a few chariots of iron have thus baffled the infinite power or force that rules the illimitable universe?

In the last six verses of the thirty-third chapter of Exodus, we have, between God and his chief favorite, Moses, a very unique dialogue. In this dialogue, Moses asks to see God's *glory*. When making this request, Moses doubtless expected that God would grant it by showing his *face*; the face being always regarded as the most *glorious* part of the person of either a man or a God. In this expectation, however, Moses is doomed to be disappointed. God informs him that his (God's) *face* is far too glorious for a mortal to gaze upon; that a sight of it would be instant and certain death to a mortal beholder; that, under the circumstances, the best that he can do will be to show his ———, the nameless *antipode* of his *face*, his "*back parts*," which, being far less glorious than his face, can be seen with comparative safety. Disappointed in his hope of seeing any more glorious part, Moses is now thankful for the privilege of seeing even this, the least glorious part of all, and this part, God is perfectly willing to show. Before the show begins, however, Moses is required to stand back in a cleft of the rock upon which they are standing, so that he can see nothing except directly in front of him. Besides this, while getting ready, unbuttoning his garments, etc., to show the parts promised, God holds one of his hands over this meek old man's eyes lest he should see some of the more glorious parts of the divine organism. When all is ready, God takes away his hand, and actually does make a shockingly indecent exposure of his "*back parts*" to the delighted gaze of the strangely so-called meek old Moses.

And now, let me ask, how can the champions of the Bible have the face to claim that the Supreme Ruler—the infinite sum of all the forces that govern the universe—ever came down thus, in a bodily form, upon a small mountain of this little planet, and made so shockingly an indecent exposure of its "*back parts*," to gratify the morbid curiosity of one old man? What would you say of such a story if it were told in some other book concerning

some other god? And what would you say of the story if I should tell you that I had met God, in a bodily form, out upon some little hill of your own neighborhood; that I had there held a long and familiar conversation with him, and that I had induced him to show me his—his—his—“back parts?” Would you, even on the strength of my direct testimony, believe that these events had actually occurred, and that the party who exhibited his “back parts” was actually the infinite power that rules the universe? If you would not believe all these things on my direct testimony, which has never yet been called in question, how can you believe them on the mere hearsay testimony of a story-teller whose veracity has always been called in question?

The custom of thus exhibiting only the back parts of their various gods, and of thus pretending that the faces of those gods were too glorious for mortal eyes to gaze upon, was once a very common one in nearly all countries. Indeed, it is said to still prevail in Thibet and in Japan, in which countries the gods are simply living men, who, by some priestly process, are converted into genuine deities. From this disgusting custom, our Bible story in question undoubtedly takes its origin. Many priests, too, of more than ordinary ambition and cunning, who have not claimed to be gods, but who have claimed to be the special favorites and companions of their respective gods, have put on vails, and then pretended that, by contact with the gods, they had imbibed so much of the divine afflatus that their own faces, ugly enough no doubt in fact, had become too glorious to be safely gazed upon by common mortals. This trick, which, with many others, Moses practiced with great success, was well calculated to impose upon the credulity of the ignorant and superstitious men of former times.

“And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: but every woman shall *borrow* of her

neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall *spoil* the Egyptians" (Ex. iii, 21-22). By reading the whole story of which this passage forms a part, we learn that God instructed Moses to *lie* to the Egyptians, and make them believe that he merely wished to lead his people out a few miles, to hold a religious meeting, after the holding of which he would return. We also learn that, by his own almighty power, exerted directly upon them, God actually did make the Egyptians believe this lie, and look with favor upon Moses and his co-conspirators, who wished to *borrow*, as they called their treacherous act of robbery, "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment," for this pretended meeting. We learn further that, thus deceived by God himself, the Egyptians kindly *loaned*, to these treacherous Hebrews, all their most valuable jewelry, clothing, etc., fully expecting that, according to promise, these valuables would all be returned within a few days. We learn still further that, after having thus, by God's order, played this outrageous wholesale confidence game upon their kind and confiding Egyptian friends, guests, and neighbors, the Hebrews, still acting under God's orders, fled from the country loaded with the spoils thus treacherously obtained. We learn, finally, that when Pharaoh pursued these worse than robbers, God treacherously destroyed him and his whole army. And now I venture the assertion that, no matter what you may pretend to believe in regard to this matter, not one of you actually does believe that the illimitable power which keeps untold billions of mighty worlds all in perfect order, ever thus instructed and aided a band of thieves to so treacherously *rob* a vast number of kind-hearted women.

In Ezek. xxxix, 10, God is represented as saying that his people "shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them." This form of robbing, being osten-

sibly performed in the way of retaliation upon open enemies, was not so bad as was the so-called borrowing affair which I have just described. In a case like this, I, being an infidel, might, perhaps, be induced to do a little robbing myself. I trust, however, that my opponents, being believers, could not, under any circumstances, be induced to do so. I trust, too, that no thought of earthly gain has ever had anything to do with their being the worshipers of this notorious robber God. Be all this as it may, however, does the infinite power that rules the universe ever authorize robbery at all?

In Ex. xxxii, 27, 29, we read: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and *slay* every man his *brother*, and every man his *companion*, and every man his *neighbor*. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day, to the Lord, even every man upon his *son*, and upon his *brother*; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day." What could be more horrible than this? Three thousand—or, as many of our Bibles have it, twenty-three thousand—bleeding human sacrifices offered to God in one day, as the price of his blessing? And, like a ghoul, God accepted this horrible gift, this monstrous mass of ghastly corpses as a pleasing sacrifice; and, in return for it, bestowed his blessing, whatever that was, upon the horrid human butchers who so readily offered it.

And yet in this soul-sickening case, the blood-be-smeared murderers, upon whom God bestowed his blessing, were themselves guilty of the very same offense for which they thus so cruelly and so treacherously butchered their poor unsuspecting sons, brothers, neighbors, and companions. Moses, it seems, had been absent nearly six weeks, professedly spending this time, in company with God, camping out upon a mountain in the neighborhood. During his

absence, his brother Aaron was left in command of the people. While acting thus as commander-in-chief, Aaron made, for the people to worship, a golden calf, which was certainly as harmless a god as they could have selected to worship. Upon his return, however, Moses looked, or at least pretended to look, upon this calf-god enterprise with a great deal of disfavor, as did also the calf-god's great rival, Jehovah himself. Instead, however, of punishing Aaron, who was certainly the principal offender in this affair, God, Moses & Co. made him their high priest, and caused to be mercilessly butchered many thousands of comparatively innocent persons, whose only offense was they had obeyed Aaron's commands.

And this is the God, all unchanged and unchangeable, who, by the sword, was forced upon our ancestors, and whom, simply because you were not born to any other god, you still continue to blindly worship. None but the mentally blind could worship this impersonation of nearly everything that is truly monstrous. Since, according to your own teachings, this fearfully atrocious God is utterly incapable of any change, or of any improvement, what assurance have you that, on some occasion in the near future, he will not, as the price of his blessing to *you*, require *you* thus, in cold blood, to cruelly and treacherously butcher *your* own sons, *your* own brothers, *your* own neighbors, and *your* own companions. Since he was once guilty of this horrible act, dare you claim that he is now too good to repeat it? And would such a requirement, if now made of *yourselves*, be any more horrible in its atrocity than it was on the occasion in question, when made of the Hebrews? Would not the nature of the act be, of necessity, the very same? Bring the case home to yourselves, therefore, and then, perhaps, you can see it in its true light. If God should now require you thus in cold blood to treacherously butcher your own sons, your own brothers, and your own other dear ones, would you, or would you not, obey that requirement? If you would obey it, and

imbrue your murderous hands in the life-blood of your own children and other loved ones, then, indeed, you are true and consistent worshipers of this bloody monstrosity called God, and are excellent examples of what the teachings of the Bible inevitably tend to make of men. If, on the other hand, you would not obey it, then you are, undeniably, a set of base hypocrites, and are not, as you pretend to be, the true and obedient worshipers of this hideous monstrosity. Nothing short of a perfect willingness, on Abraham's part, to butcher and to roast his own son, would satisfy this monstrous God, in the case of that famous old polygamist and cut-throat, and nothing short of a similar willingness on your part to butcher and to roast your own children, whenever called upon so to do, will satisfy him in your case. Remember that this terrible God never changes—never grows any better. Abraham was perfectly willing to butcher his own son, and to roast him, in order, with the fumes of his burning flesh, to gratify the insatiate olfactories of this hideous deity; and this willingness, on Abraham's part, to commit this unutterably atrocious crime, was imputed to him, by this bloody God, for righteousness. This God may, or may not, command you thus to butcher and to roast your own children. Having never changed, however, since he did make such a command, he is certainly none too good to make such a command now. Whether he does, or does not, ever make any such command, however, makes no difference. If you would be righteous in his eyes, you must, at all times, be perfectly willing, under any conceivable circumstances, to commit this most horrible crime, in case he should see fit to command you to commit it. You must not blame Freeman, Guiteau, and others for their similar obedience to this God. This doctrine is plainly taught in the Bible, and if the doctrine be a pernicious one, then, of necessity, the Bible is a pernicious book. Put yourselves in the places of either the murderers or the murdered, and how does this case appear? And you sing praises to this terrible God,

and persecute me so bitterly, because my soul revolts from the worship of so bloody a monster. Does the infinite power that rules the universe ever command men thus in cold blood to butcher their own sons, their own brothers their own neighbors, and their own companions?

“And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword” (Josh. vi, 21). For a long list of similar butcheries, see the entire book of Joshua, and especially the tenth chapter. By the direct command of the God whom you now worship, and who is no better now than he was then, Joshua invariably thus butchered, without any distinction of age, sex, or condition, all of the inhabitants of all of the many cities that he captured. In every case of the taking of a city, he “utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining, . . . he utterly destroyed all that breathed.” All of these horrible wholesale murders were committed, too, not for anything wrong that the poor defenseless victims had done, but simply because this adopted God of yours, who was then merely the tutelary divinity of the Hebrews alone, wanted their lands for his own chosen band of robbers and murderers. The whole soul-sickening history closes as follows: “And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time; because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel” (Josh. x, 42). How can you have the face to claim that the illimitable force that rules the universe was ever this bloody monster—this “Lord God of Israel?”

In the thirty-first chapter of Numbers, we have an account of the destruction of the Midianites, by the command of this same fearfully blood-thirsty tutelary divinity of the Hebrews. In its soul-sickening atrocity, this utterly uncalled for butchery eclipses all other butcheries of which we have any account in the entire history of the world. The soldiers who had been sent out against Midian slew all of the Midianitish men, who seem to have been to-

tally unprepared for such an attack. More merciful, however, than was "the Lord God of Israel," these soldiers spared the women and the children, and brought them all in as captives. Because these poor, helpless, and unoffending captives had been thus spared by the soldiery, Moses was very angry. Acting under the orders of his God—the God that he himself had made, the God that you now blindly worship—he, therefore, went out to meet the soldiers, and said to them: "Have ye saved all the women alive? Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known a man by lying with him. But all the women children that have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves." In order to ascertain which ones of these females had, and which ones had not, "known a man by lying with him," all of them who had attained womanhood had, of necessity, to be subjected to a surgical examination of certain nameless parts of their bodies. A public examination, so revolting to all the instincts of female modesty, performed by the lewd and unskillful priests and soldiery, cannot be more than hinted at here.

When, however, this unutterably revolting examination was ended; when, by this means, the virgins had all been discovered, and when they had been separated from the other women, then began the cold-blooded, the soul-sickening, wholesale butchery of the many tens of thousands of wives, mothers, and male infants. The signal was given. At once the air was rent, at once the earth was made to tremble with the deafening yells of the murderers, now raging like ravenous wild beasts at the smell of blood, and the piercing shrieks of their helpless victims, now wild with unutterable terror. Picture, if you can, the whole unspeakably horrible scene as being now enacted before your own eyes. Picture it, too, if you can, as being enacted with your own wives, your own sisters, your own mothers, your own married daughters, your own bright little infant sons as the victims. A hundred thousand or

more are to be butchered. The little ones—your own sweet babies among them—cling to their mothers, and frantically plead for protection which the poor doomed mothers, of course, can not give. On their bended knees, in tones that would move the hearts of the foulest fiends of hell, the mothers—your own wife, your own mother, your own married sisters and married daughters among them—implore mercy, not for themselves, but for their poor little babes. Knowing no such thing as mercy, however, God's servants tear tens of thousands of infants at a time from the arms of their mothers, hurl them by their feet in the air, and crush their poor, tender little heads upon the stones. Hear the awful—the unearthly wailings of those bereaved mothers! Earth never before heard a sound so full of unutterable woe—of unspeakable despair. But that awful, that never-to-be-forgotten, cry is being forever hushed. By the direct orders of the God that you either blindly or wickedly worship, the heads of these poor helpless mothers are now being cleft from their shoulders and made to roll in the dust, their tender bosoms are being pierced with rude weapons of iron, their skulls are being crushed with heavy clubs and stones, and their throats are being cut and their bowels ripped open with formidable butcher-knives. Vast heaps of warm, quivering, bleeding corpses cover the ground. Great pools of dark, smoking blood are collecting in all the low places, and a fearfully sickening odor is arising from this, the most horrible of all the slaughter pens that the earth ever knew. Yes, if you can do so, picture to yourself all the unutterable horrors of this, the most unspeakably hideous scene ever enacted upon earth. If you can do so, picture to yourself your own loved ones all being thus brutally butchered; then, if you still feel like doing so, break forth into loud hallelujahs of praise to the blood-besmeared deific monstrosity who is having it done. In the name of humanity, however, do not ask me to blacken my soul by joining you in these your worse than hellish orgies! And

do not ever again blame the Mormons, the faithful worshipers of this bloody God, for the Mountain Meadow Massacre, or deny that this God commanded the massacre.

In a poem, entitled the "Devil's Defense," I have depicted this whole fiendish affair as follows :

"God ord'reth his band, with a bloody hand,
To butcher both youg and old ;
To render the land, like a waste of sand,
Where the billows once have rolled.
They hasten to do as the Lord doth command,
Like demons let loose, they destroy the whole land ;
Alas ! for their victims ! wherever they turn,
Destruction awaits, while their villages burn.
Great volumes of smoke, like a vast floating pall,
Hang dark o'er the valleys, the mountains, and all ;
From the depths of their darkness, arise on the air,
Such terrible yells and such screams of despair,
That all the damned spirits and demons of hell
Could never this scene in its horrors excel.

"Of strong men and brave, but a few now remain,
Their bodies lie scattered all over the plain ;
Those few are surrounded—like wild beasts at bay,
They rush on their murd'ers, they yell and they slay ;
But, beaten by numbers, their eyes gleaming fire,
They scream their defiance, they fall and expire.

"Now bursts forth anew, on the smoke-burdened air,
More terrible wailings of utter despair ;
Old women, whose locks are as white as the snow,
Are butchered and left for the vulture and crow.
The mothers all flee with their babes at their breast—
Oh ! could they save these, they could lose all the rest—
But flight is in vain, by the Lord's chosen men,
They're caught and conveyed to a vast slaughter pen,
A signal is given, around them there rains
A shower of blood mixed with their babies' crushed brains.
Oh ! horrible ! horrible ! maddening sight !

Haste ! haste ! ye deep darkness, and hide it in night !
The mothers still cling to the bodies yet hot,
They gaze in the eyes, but are recognized not ;
The lips that so lately were wreathed in a smile,
All mangled and gory, still quiver awhile ;
Death's pallor creeps over each poor little face,
The heart-throbbings cease, and the eyes glaze apace.
The mothers see this, and are now glad to die,
No longer they struggle, no longer they cry ;
Their throats are now cut, and their blood, like a spout,
On their babies' dead faces, comes gushing right out ;
Their bodies, unburied, encumber the sod,
And this is all done by the orthodox God."

After witnessing this unspeakably horrible butchery of their mothers, their married sisters, and their little brothers, 32,000 virgin girls were divided, for the vilest of purposes, among the blood-besmeared murderers—the priests, the soldiers, and the citizens all coming in for a share of them. For his own share, the God that had all these atrocious murders committed—the unchanged and unchangeable God that you now worship—received thirty-two of these virgins, to be used, of course, by his priests as his proxies.

And this, the most hideous of all monstrosities, is the God to whom you pay your blind devotions, although you admit that he is no better now than he was when he had all of these horrible crimes committed. This is the God for whom you erect so many of those gorgeous resorts of pride, vanity, bigotry, fashion, and intolerance, called churches, cathedrals, etc. This is the God for whom you keep up so many vast armies of worse than useless non-producers called priests, preachers, ministers of the gospel, etc. This is the God to whom you professedly offer those buncombe public addresses of yours, which you are pleased to call prayers. This is the God whom you now, with the most abject flatteries, bamboozle into

serving you, just as the Hebrews formerly bamboozled him, with roast meats, into serving them. But is this God the infinite force that rules the universe? Who can have the face to declare that he is?

From a great number of passages like the following, we learn that this monstrous God was invented exclusively for the Hebrews, and that he was never intended to be the God of any other people: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an *everlasting covenant*; to be a *God* unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. xvii, 7). Here God speaks of himself, not in a general or unlimited manner, as he would speak if he regarded himself as the only God, but in a particular and limited manner as "*a God*;" and since, as every grammarian knows, the limiting particle *a* means simply *one*, the expression "*a God*" evidently means simply *one* of the *Gods*. The whole matter, then, reduces to this, that one of the Gods, called Jehovah, promises to be a special God or protector, a tutelary divinity, to a certain man and his posterity. Indeed, as I have already fully explained in former lectures, the Hebrew word Elohim, which is the first appellation of the deity to be found in the Bible, is a noun in the *plural* number, and signifies an *assemblage*, *corporation*, or *congress* of gods, and not an *individual* God. At the start, all of these Gods seem to have worked harmoniously together as partners in the creation of the world, of man, and of all other things. After a while, however, when men had become quite numerous, these Gods seem to have dissolved their firm, their congress, or Elohim, and to have each taken, as his individual share of the partnership property, a certain portion of the earth and a certain tribe or nation of men. In this division, Baal chose for his portion the Assyrians, with the country which they inhabited; Chemosh chose the Ammonites and their country; Jehovah, the Hebrews and whatever country he might be able to take for them. And so of all the other Gods. Each of them became the

tutelary divinity of a particular people to whom alone he devoted his entire attention, and whose entire devotion as worshipers he claimed to himself alone. All of these Gods were equally *real*, and were usually admitted to be so by one another's worshipers. Naturally enough, however, each nation or people were wont to claim that their own particular God or tutelary divinity was, in some way, superior to any of the other Gods. Thus, while the Hebrews generally looked upon Baal, Chemosh, Molech, etc., as *real Gods*, and while they often worshiped them as such, they were, nevertheless, wont to arrogantly claim that their own tutelary divinity, Jehovah, was far superior in every respect to any of these other Gods. They were wont to express this assumed superiority by calling him the "*Lord God*," that is, the Lord or Chief of the Gods, the "*God of gods*," etc.

"And *ye* shall be *my people*, and *I* will be *your God*" (Jer. xxx, 22). "For *thou* art an *holy people* unto the *Lord thy God*, and the *Lord* hath chosen *thee* to be a *peculiar people* unto *himself*, above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Deut. xiv, 2). "And *ye* shall be *holy* [that is, entirely set aside or devoted] unto *me*: for *I* the *Lord* am *holy* [that is, entirely set aside or devoted unto you], and have severed *you* from *other people*, that *ye* should be *mine*" (Lev. xx, 26). The "other people," of course, were not his. They all belonged of right to other Gods who, in the general division of which I have spoken, had chosen them, just as this God had chosen the Hebrews. All of the passages which I have just quoted, and which were all either spoken directly by God's inventors or put into his mouth by them, indicate a covenant or contract by which the contracting parties, God and the Hebrews, mutually bind themselves to be exclusively each other's. Of necessity, this contract of mutual exclusiveness was as binding upon the one of the contracting parties as it was upon the other. If, by its provisions, the Hebrews were bound to confine themselves to this one God, then, of

necessity, by the same provisions, he was bound to confine himself to this one people. Indeed, whether applied to God or to the people, the word holy means simply set apart or exclusive. To be holy unto God, then, is simply to be set apart to him, to be exclusively his. No one can be holy at all, without being thus set apart or exclusively devoted to some particular person, people, use, or thing. When, therefore, God, declares himself to be holy, he simply declares himself to be thus exclusively set apart or devoted to some particular people, purpose, or thing. He requires the Hebrews to be holy or exclusive to him; and, as a reason for requiring this exclusiveness on their part, he informs them that he is thus holy or exclusive. It is true that he does not say to whom he is thus holy or exclusive, but the connection renders it impossible for him to mean anybody except the Hebrews. Had he meant to be the God of all nations, he would not have been holy or exclusive to any of them. By never becoming the God of any other people, he faithfully kept his part of the covenant in question, and nothing enraged him so much as for the Hebrews, by becoming the people of some other God, to break their part of it.

“Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am *married* unto you” (Jer. iii, 14). “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the contract that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt: which my covenant they brake, although I was an *husband* unto them, saith the Lord” (Jer. xxxi, 31-32). “Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto *me*, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them [certain other gods of whom he was extremely jealous] to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, That thou hast slain my children?” (Ezek. xvi, 20-21). From these, and a great many other similar passages, we learn that the peculiar union

into which God and Israel entered with each other was a *marriage* union. And did not the very nature of this union bind both of the parties to it, both God the husband, and Israel the wife, to equally forsake all others and to cleave unto each other alone? If it was whoredom, as God always called it, for the bride in this case to have any love intercourse with any other God, would it not have been equally whoredom for the husband to have held similar love intercourse with any other people? Was the husband any less bound than was the wife? Had he any other wife? If not, could he properly have held any love intercourse with any other people? If not, was he not exclusively the God, the tutelary divinity, of the Hebrews? If there really be any love intercourse between this God, this husband of the Hebrews, and any other people—the Christians, for instance—does not that intercourse constitute a case of whoredom or adultery?

From the fact that this married God was almost constantly in a towering rage of jealousy because of the intimacy of his wife with certain other Gods—from the fact that he was almost constantly lecturing her against those Gods, and accusing her of adultery or whoredom with them, we learn that he believed them to be genuine deities, just as real, just as substantial, as was he himself. As it is utterly impossible for a man to become really jealous of that which he does not believe to have any existence—as it is utterly impossible for him to really believe that his wife has actually committed adultery or whoredom, without having had illicit intercourse with a real man, or something else real—so it was with God. He could not possibly have been so jealous as he was of Gods whom he did not believe to have any existence. He could not possibly have believed that his wife had actually committed adultery or whoredom with those Gods without also believing that the Gods themselves were real Gods similar to himself. And if he did thus believe, as he undeniably did, that those his various rivals were real Gods the same as

himself, was he, or was he not, correct in that belief? If he was correct, then he was, and still is, only one of many real Gods, and he may not be, in any respect, superior to any of the balance of them. In this case, the champions of the Bible teach a lie when they teach, as they all do, that he is himself the only real true God that ever existed. If he was not correct in his belief—if he was laboring under a gross and pernicious error in regard to this matter—then he undeniably was, and, without a change for the better—a change which his worshipers will not permit him to have—he must still be a very ignorant personage. In this case, the champions of the Bible teach a lie when they teach, as they all do, that he is absolutely omniscient. In any possible view of the case, therefore, the champions of the Bible are convicted of teaching a lie; and, in no possible view of the case, could this jealous-husband God have been, or could he still be, the Supreme Ruler of the Universe.

If, in order to escape this unpleasant dilemma, the champions of the Bible should conclude to deny that their God believed his various and often successful rivals to be real Gods, they would only make the matter worse. They would simply make their own God a huge idiot, forever foaming with furious jealousy—jealousy of nothing at all; an atrocious monster, forever insulting and abusing his wife for having committed adultery or whoredom with nothing at all—with Baal, with Chemosh, with Molech, with the Great Giascutis, with the Great Jumping Jingo, or with something else which he very well knew never had any existence. They would also make their own God a very feeble being, rarely able to successfully cope, in his wife's affections or in anything else, with his rivals, these utter nonentities.

“Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the *God of Israel* hath separated you from the congregation of *Israel*? . . .” (Num. xvi, 9.) “For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the *God of Israel*”

(Is. xlviii, 2). “So now the *Lord God* of *Israel* has dispossessed the Amorites [another God’s people] from before *his people Israel*, and shouldst thou possess it? Wilt not *thou* possess that which *Chemosh thy God* giveth *thee* to possess? So whomsoever the *Lord our God* shall drive out from before *us*, them will *we* possess” (Jud. xi, 23, 24). In all of these passages, the “God of Israel” is mentioned, just as is the “king of Israel” in other passages, as a personage peculiar or exclusive to Israel; as a personage who had no claim to the love, the allegiance, or the adoration of any other people, and to whose love and protection no other people had any claim. He had no more claim to be regarded as the universal God of all nations than had the God of the Amorites, Chemosh, who is mentioned in exactly the same manner.

The last passage quoted was spoken by Jephthah, commander-in-chief of the Israelitish armies, to the king of the Amorites. From this passage, we learn that Jephthah did not doubt that Chemosh was a real God, standing in the same relation to his chosen people, the Amorites, as that in which Jehovah stood to his chosen people, the Hebrews. We learn, too, that Jephthah evidently believed that Chemosh could just as truly give lands to his people as Jehovah could give them to his. Indeed, as I have already said, every nation was supposed to have its own peculiar or exclusive tutelary divinity. All of these divinities were supposed to be equally real Gods, but possessed of different degrees of power, intelligence, etc.; each nation believing that their own God was superior to any of the others. The God that you now worship was only one of many similar deities, and, in choosing him, you did no better than you would have done had you chosen Baal, Chemosh, or any of the other similar Gods. Indeed, I doubt whether you did so well. As given in the Bible, his record is rather worse than that of any other God. If you know of any God with a worse record, what God is it, and in what respect is his record worse?

You may claim that, unlike most of the other Gods, your God never required and never accepted *human sacrifices*. The Bible, however, clearly teaches that he did require them, and did accept them. "And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering" (Jud. xi, 30, 31). Since Jephthah certainly could not have expected a bullock, a ram, or any other clean beast, to come "forth of the doors of" his "*house* to meet" him on his return from battle, and since he certainly could, and certainly would, expect the various members of his family to thus come forth, he certainly meant to devote to God some member of his family. Indeed, the great value which obviously attached to the promised sacrifice could not have attached to any other living thing in his possession. Even if he had been accustomed to keep his bullocks, his rams, etc., in his "*house*," and even if he had expected these beasts to joyfully come "forth of the doors of" his "*house* to meet" him on his return, he certainly could not have had the face to thus ask God to give him a great victory in return for one of these common and cheap sacrifices, hundreds of which were offered to God every day. Jephthah certainly meant to offer a sacrifice corresponding in value to the benefit expected in return—a sacrifice which he himself regarded, and which he correctly expected God to regard, as surpassing a bullock or a ram in value, just as much as a great national victory surpasses in value the most common every-day occurrence of individual life. He certainly meant to offer a sacrifice which, by its great desirability to him, would be an effectual inducement to God to grant the desired victory; and no common sacrifice of a bullock, or a ram, could have been expected to constitute any such effectual inducement. At any rate, in fulfilment of his vow,

he did offer to God, in the form of a burnt-offering, his own daughter, and God did accept that horrible offering.

Admitting, however, that, when making the vow in question, Jephthah may have been accustomed to keep his cattle in his house with his wife and children, and admitting that, like his wife and children, these cattle may have been accustomed to come "forth of the doors of" his "house to meet" him on his return from a journey; admitting that, under these circumstances, Jephthah may have been uncertain whether, in return for victory, he would have to offer up as a burnt-offering, his wife, his daughter, or his bull, how much better do we render the matter?

My opponents will hardly venture to deny that, whatever Jephthah may or may not have known in regard to the matter, God knew full well what the burnt-offering, thus rashly promised by Jephthah, would prove to be. If he had any such foreknowledge of future events, as my opponents claim that he has, he certainly must have known exactly what that burnt-offering would be; and since, in return for that offering, he granted a favor worth more than ten thousand bulls, he certainly must have regarded the single offering expected as worth more than that number of bulls. And what one living thing of all that Jephthah possessed, except his beautiful daughter, could have been regarded as of so great value? At any rate, since God had full control of all future events, he undeniably had it in his power to so control those events that the promised burnt-offering should be just what he wished it to be. And this power, he doubtless exercised. If, then, he had not wished it to have been a beautiful young woman, would it have been one? Would he not have either rejected Jephthah's offer, or else have so controlled events that some other creature, and not this young woman, should be the first to meet Jephthah on his return from battle? Had he willed it to be otherwise than it was, would it not have been otherwise? If he had nothing to

do with the events that resulted in the offering of this young woman to him as a burnt-offering, what proof have we that he has ever had anything to do with any of the events that have ever occurred upon earth? If those events occurred without his having anything to do with them, may not all other events have occurred in precisely the same manner?

Be all these things as they may, however, God certainly did accept Jephthah's offer, and, in return for the thing offered, certainly did, in a miraculous manner, deliver the Ammonites into Jephthah's hands. On his return home, after this God-procured victory, Jephthah was first met by his only daughter, whom he dearly loved, but whom, in fulfilment of his vow, he was bound to butcher and to roast as an offering to God. He informed her of his vow, and she, knowing that the law compelled him to fulfil that vow, expressed her willingness to be thus butchered, dressed (not like a lady but like a pig), roasted (still like a pig), and served up, *a la mode cannibale*, on the Lord's table. All she asked was a stay of proceedings for two months that she might "go up and down the mountains, and bewail" her "virginity." She probably asked this delay in order that she might put herself in a first-rate condition to be butchered, and might give her flesh as delicious a flavor as possible. The very thought that, to the Lord's fastidious taste, she might prove an unsavory *dish* was probably more than her proud young spirit could bear.

The balance of this charming story, we learn from the thirty-ninth verse, which says: "And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who *did* with her according to his *vow* which he had *vowed*." If God had not been perfectly willing that this vow should be fulfilled, would he not, before the close of those two months, have released Jephthah from the obligation of the vow? He well knew that, without such a release from him, Jephthah was compelled, by the laws of

the land—laws which God himself had given—to fulfil that vow. Does not the fact, then, that, under these circumstances, while present witnessing the proceedings, God permitted such a sacrifice to be offered to him, prove, beyond all reasonable contradiction, that the offering was an acceptable one? Picture to yourselves this God, this inordinate lover of roast meats, sitting quietly by, watching Jephthah as he cuts the throat of his only child, his beautiful daughter, as he catches her blood in a basin, as he takes out her heart, her liver, her intestines, etc., and as he roasts her flesh upon the altar. Yes, picture all these things to yourself, and then, if you feel like doing so, break forth into songs of praise to this monstrous cannibal God. In the name of humanity, however, do not any more claim that he is a fit object to be worshiped by any but savages, cannibals, Freemans, Guiteaus, *et al.*; and do not any more blasphemously claim that he is the infinite power that rules the universe.

Here, then, we have a clear case in which a human sacrifice was offered to the God of the Bible—the God that you worship, and accepted by him. This is as clear a case as can be made out against any other God of the world. In this case, too, the sacrifice was made, not in violation of God's laws as revealed to Moses, but strictly in accordance with them. But where is the law, you ask, in accordance with which Jephthah made and executed his vow to offer to the Lord a human sacrifice? It is found in Lev. xxvii, 28, 29, and reads as follows: “Notwithstanding no *devoted* thing [that is, no thing promised to the Lord by a vow or an oath], that a man shall *devote* unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of *man* and of beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: . . . none *devoted*, which shall be *devoted* of men [as Jephthah's daughter was], shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to *death*.” As you plainly see, this law, which, according to your own teachings, was derived from God himself, just as fully provides for the devoting of men unto the Lord

as it provides for the devoting unto him of beasts or of anything else ; and it strictly requires every human being, as well as every beast, thus devoted, to “be surely put to death.” Having, in accordance with this law, devoted to the Lord some member of his family, Jephthah, when he perceived that the death lot had fallen upon his only child, his beloved daughter, never, for a moment, thought of such a thing as the breaking of his vow. He simply said : “Alas, my daughter ! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me : for [by the vow in question] I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and [because the laws strictly requires every devoted thing to “be surely put to death”] *I cannot go back.*” The Hebrews, too, so far from denouncing and punishing Jephthah as one who, in thus sacrificing his own daughter to the Lord, had violated their laws, looked upon him as the preserver of those laws, and honored him by making him their supreme judge during life. Would time permit me, I could show that, under this same law, vast numbers of human beings were sacrificed unto the Lord that you now worship. I will give only one instance, however—an instance in which he himself demanded the sacrifice.

In the twenty-first chapter of 2 Sam. we learn that, for an offense committed some thirty years before by their grandfather, Saul—an offense for which Saul himself had never been punished or even reproved—God required seven innocent children, Saul’s grandsons, to be offered up unto himself as sacrifices to appease his wrath, which had strangely kindled up so many years after the commission of the alleged offense. Although five of these children were his own step-sons, David, who, for obvious reasons, was a man after God’s own heart, had this horrible sacrifice duly offered. The ninth and the fourteenth verses say : “And he [David] delivered them [the seven children] into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they *hanged* them in the hill before the *Lord*. . . . And after that God was entreated for the land.”

It seems that, at the time in question, God was afflicting the land with a fearful famine, and that, when inquired of concerning this matter, he "answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." He also seems to have given David to understand that, whatever sacrifices the Gibeonites might demand, in satisfaction of the wrongs their ancestors had suffered at the hands of Saul, must be offered before the famine would be removed. "Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement [required by the Lord, but left by him to be determined by the Gibeonites], that [by turning away God's wrath] ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord? And the Gibeonites said unto him, . . . Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will *hang* them up *unto* the *Lord* in Gibeah of Saul, whom the Lord did choose. And the king said, I will give them" (2 Sam. xxi, 3-6).

From the tenth verse, we learn that the friends of these murdered children were not permitted to take their dead bodies down for burial, since the mother of two of them, to keep the birds and the beasts of prey from feeding upon the lifeless bodies of her poor loved little ones, lay upon the hard rock near them, and guarded them, day and night, from the time of barley harvest, when they were so foully murdered, until the rains of autumn began to fall upon them. Then nothing remained of them but the bones, which had fallen down, and lay scattered upon the ground just as they fell. And the God that you worship positively demanded this horrible sacrifice before he would relieve the land from the long and terrible famine with which he was afflicting it. So soon as the sacrifice was offered, however, he very graciously caused the famine to cease. The other five children, being full orphans, had no fond mother to thus guard their decaying bodies. Their stepfather, David, was in his gorgeous harem, reveling with his many wives and concubines, while the bodies of these poor mur-

dered orphans, whose protector he should have been, were thus decaying in the sun.

Picture to yourself the unutterable agony of that loving mother as she keeps her lone vigils, day and night, upon the cold, hard rock, for long weary months, while the bodies of her poor murdered children are slowly dropping to pieces before her face. Picture to yourself your own sweet and beloved children, thus foully murdered for no offense of their own, and thus denied the last sad rite of burial. Picture yourself as thus guarding their dead bodies, day and night, for long weary months. Picture yourself as gazing, day after day, upon their swollen and livid faces, while every trace of resemblance to their former selves slowly fades from their ghastly features—while the flesh slowly drops from their bones—while their bones slowly fall asunder and drop upon the ground. Yes, picture to yourselves all these things, and then, if you feel like doing so break forth, as you now often do, in hallelujahs to the unutterably hideous monster that caused them all to be done. In the name of humanity, however, do not ask me to join you in orgies so unspeakably horrible as such shoutings, under such circumstances, would certainly be. I would rather praise the devil.

And now, in all candor, please answer: Have I not fully demonstrated that this God—this blood-blackened monster of the Bible—is simply a hideous invention with which the priests frighten the people, and not the sublime and illimitable power that rules the universe?

LECTURE NINETEENTH.

THE MESSIAH OR SAVIOR.

IN former lectures, the fact has been fully shown that all the gods of the world were originally assumed or invented simply to account for the various phenomena of nature, the real causes of which, primitive men, in their extreme ignorance, could neither perceive nor understand. After having been thus assumed or invented, however, all of these gods were, as a matter of course, invisible, intangible, inapproachable, and incomprehensible. Beings so mighty as the imaginary gods were supposed to be, and yet so mysterious, were, naturally enough; regarded by men with intense awe mingled with a great but undefinable fear. And yet, men, not being able to communicate, in any reliable way, with these gods, were constantly in doubt as to the surest method of winning their favor, or of avoiding the often dire effects of their almost incessant anger.

In order, therefore, to remedy this unpleasant condition of affairs, men attempted, in various ways, to come into more direct and reliable communication with the gods. By ascending high mountains, some attempted to reach heaven, the supposed dwelling-place of the gods; and, if we are to believe the Bible and other so-called sacred books, many of them succeeded in this attempt, or, at least, succeeded in getting within communicating distance of heaven. Moses is said to have accomplished this feat upon Mount Sinai. The great mass of mankind, however,

living, as they did, in valleys or on plains, were unable to reach heaven in this way, or even to approach within hailing distance of it. Some of these lowlanders are said to have attempted to reach it by means of a very high tower, and to have been prevented from succeeding in this laudable enterprise, by the ungenerous interference of the jealous and alarmed gods themselves, who unanimously agreed to never permit mortals, in this manner, to invade the celestial dominions.

To the great mass of mankind, therefore, there remained only two methods by which the desired communications could possibly be carried on. One of these methods was to invent a third order of beings with wings, whose special business it should be to fly back and forth between earth and heaven, and to bear messages in both directions. The other method was to induce the gods themselves to descend to the earth, and to thus put themselves within the reach of men. In almost every country of the world, both of these methods came into common use, and, in most countries, they are in common use to-day. From the nature of their employment, the winged beings were called angels or inferior gods.

Having resolved to bring the gods to the earth, men resorted to various methods by which to accomplish this object. In the primitive condition of society that then prevailed, in nearly all countries, the obtaining of food was the one great object of life. Like hungry beasts, birds, etc., of all kinds, hungry men would do more for food than for anything else. Knowing this fact, and supposing that, in this respect, the gods were like themselves, most men were accustomed to lay *baits* for the gods, or to allure them down with various kinds of food. Flesh, being the principal article of food of the people of those times, was generally used for *god-bait*, and this, often seasoned with rich spices and fragrant herbs, was usually burnt, in order that its odors, ascending to heaven, might reach the gods and attract them to the spot whence those odors

came. This method of *god-baiting* was generally, and, in some countries, still is, a very successful one. In the earlier part of their respective careers, when, like their worshipers, they were quite gross in their habits, caring very little for anything except food and sexual enjoyments, all the gods of any note in the whole world, your old Jewish God not excepted, were wont to be successfully allured to earth by means of these *baits*.

When, however, men became somewhat advanced in civilization—when, having at all times an abundance drawn from agricultural sources, they ceased to regard food alone as the principal thing to be desired and sought after—when they themselves began to place a higher value upon wealth, splendor, public honors, etc., than they placed upon mere articles of food, they, naturally enough, supposed that the gods had undergone a similar change of taste in regard to these things. They therefore gradually ceased to lay *meat-baits* for the gods, and began, just as successfully, to allure them down by erecting for them gorgeous *god-houses*, making them valuable *presents*, and bestowing upon them the most extravagant public *honors*. By these means, all the gods that have survived the god-destroying light of modern science are still wont to be successfully lured down.

Sometimes the gods were called down only temporarily, and were permitted to return to heaven as soon as the business was transacted for which the call had been made. At other times, they were induced to remain, for years at a time, among their respective sets of worshipers. By the promise of an abundance of roast beef and other choice articles of food, almost any of them could be induced to thus remain upon earth. During this, their sublunary sojourn among men, some of these gods took up their abodes in living animals, such as the bull, the ape, the elephant, etc.; others took up their abodes in living men; and others still, in images of wood, stone, metal, etc.; or in boxes, small rooms, etc., prepared specially for their

habitations. For a long time the old God of the Hebrews, whom, under a greatly modified form, you now worship, dwelt thus in a wooden box about forty-eight inches in length, thirty inches in width, and thirty inches in height. In this little box, he was easily carried about by his captors in all their journeyings, and was always on hand whenever he was wanted, and, frequently, when he was not wanted. Afterwards, when his captors ceased to live a nomadic life, they prepared, for his accommodation, a small prison, called the most holy place, in the temple, near the altar or kitchen fire-place of the temple, where, without being exposed to the gaze of vulgar eyes, he might regale himself upon the savory odors of beef, mutton, etc., which were almost constantly kept roasting upon this altar, for his especial benefit.

In most of the civilized countries of the world, men have now pretty generally abandoned this vulgar and expensive custom of regaling their gluttonous gods upon roast meats and other table luxuries. These mysterious gods, however, are supposed still to take up their abodes in the houses erected for their use, just as martins, pigeons, and many other kinds of birds are wont to take up their abodes in the boxes and little houses prepared for their use. Our own country is full of *God-houses*, called *churches*, *cathedrals*, etc., which are supposed to be thus occupied.

In all of these cases, however, the gods proved more or less unsatisfactory. None but priests could ever deal with them, and even the priests frequently failed to correctly comprehend their natures, their wishes, etc. Indeed, so capricious and so ill-natured were most of these gods, whether free or captured, that they could not be kept, much of the time, in anything like a good humor, even by their own chosen priests who offered to them daily many tons of roast beef and other good things furnished by the poor overtaxed people. The God of the Hebrews, in particular, although the most prodigious consumer of beef on record, was almost constantly in a towering rage about one

trivial thing or another. Indeed, so far from seeming to be in sympathy with the human race, the gods generally seemed to be enemies to mankind—even to those people who most devoutly worshiped them, and most bountifully fed them. Although, for the sake of the abundant supplies of roast beef and other good things that were furnished them, and of which they were so excessively fond, they would consent to dwell thus among men; yet, between themselves and men, there were no kindred ties, no common sympathies. Not knowing how to approach them in an acceptable manner, men, although striving to please them, were almost constantly doing something to offend them. When offended, too, these gods were wont to vent their unreasonable wrath indiscriminately upon the innocent and the guilty. This fact has been fully shown in preceding lectures.

Under such circumstances, men, naturally enough, began to feel the need of *mediators*—of persons related by *kindred ties* and *common sympathies*, both to the *gods* and to *themselves*—of persons who could understand and pity the many wants and infirmities of *men*, and, at the same time, know how to approach the *gods*, at all times, in an acceptable manner. An order or race of beings *half god* and *half man*, if they could only be produced, would be the very things desired. And why could they not be produced? Why could not the gods be induced to cohabit with the daughters of men and thus produce these much-to-be-desired beings? The conception of such an idea was perfectly natural; and when men had once conceived it, they began to really hope that such cohabitation would actually take place. By having beautiful virgins sleep almost nightly in the temples, and by various other expedients, they began to tempt or encourage the gods to condescend to indulge in this form of cohabitation. Throughout almost every land, too, many virgins, on their own responsibility, began to offer the gods a chance to beget themselves some hybrid or half-breed offspring, whenever their god-

ships might desire to do so. Under all of these circumstances, it would have been strange indeed if no offspring of the desired *cross* had been obtained. Men began also to conceive ideals of what kind of beings ought to result from this *cross*, should it ever be successfully effected. Various gods were consulted upon the subject; and, through their priests and their prophets, they expressed their intention, on some suitable occasion in the indefinite future, to beget themselves a son or two each—they never would consent to beget daughters—upon virgin human mothers.

The poets of various countries, taking up these vague but popular predictions, were wont to sing of the glorious time coming, when the son of a god should be born unto their own respective nations. The people, too, were on the lookout for the coming of such a personage; each nation, of course, expecting him to appear, as predicted by their own prophets, among *themselves*, and not among the people of any *other nation*. When, therefore, any great hero, statesman, philosopher, or magician arose in any country, he was sure to be fixed upon by many of his most ignorant and most impatiently awaiting countrymen as the *son of a god*. This was especially the case with eminent men who chanced to have been born, in families of respectability, to *unmarried women*. Indeed, it was generally assumed that the gods were all too fastidious to condescend to cohabit with any but *virgins* of the very *first class*. With these virgins, however, they finally became so intimate, and their sons by these virgins became so common, that, in some countries, laws were enacted forbidding any unmarried woman who chanced to become a mother, to claim that her child was the offspring of a god.

As might have been expected, the great facilities which, as we have already seen, were offered to the gods for begetting offspring upon human mothers, their hybrid sons—they either could not or would not beget daughters—became quite numerous, in nearly all countries, and, by their rivalry, became the source of much dissension and

bloodshed. None of them, however, were ever accepted as genuine demi-gods by the intelligent portion of the people among whom they severally made their appearance. Neither were any of them ever accepted as genuine demi-gods by their own nearest friends and neighbors. These parties, who, of all the people, had the best opportunities to ascertain the facts in the case, were generally as incredulous in regard to the divine paternity of any one of these pretended demi-gods as we would now be in regard to that of a bastard child borne by some young woman of our own neighborhood, should he claim, or should his mother, for him, claim that he was the son of a god.

The first followers of all these pretended demi-gods were generally confined to the ignorant vagrant class, who, with equal readiness, would have followed any other pretender, had he offered them a prospect of living without honest labor. With such a following, many of these so-called sons of gods became disturbers of the peace, and more than a dozen of them in all, who had succeeded in acquiring a dangerous influence, were executed as criminals. Whenever any one of them was thus executed, his followers, of course, were placed under the necessity of either admitting that he was an impostor, a mere man, unable to save his own life, and that themselves were the dupes of an impostor, or of setting up the claim that his death, in this very manner, was an essential part of his own mysterious plan of saving the human race, or at least a certain elect portion of them, from the fearful wrath of the old god, his putative sire. Such a claim has been set up for their deceased leader, by the respective sets of followers of over a dozen executed personages. Of these so-called saviors, I have chosen Jesus as the subject of this, and the next lecture. I give this preference to Jesus, not because I regard his claims to deityship as any stronger, or as any better established, than are those of Chrishna, Prometheus, and others, but simply because he is one of the adopted deities of my own country.

According to all the so-called orthodox teachings on the subject, Jesus was not only the *son* of the old *God* of the *Hebrews*, but was, also, at the same time, that *identical old God himself*. According to these teachings, he must, of necessity, have been, at the same time, his own father, and his own son. Of equal necessity, he must also have been two distinct individuals, and, at the same time, only one individual. Besides these monstrous absurdities and utter impossibilities, he must, also, of equal necessity, have been the maker, if not the father, of his own mother, and, indeed, of all his ancestors. Before considering him in these various relations and conditions, I wish to consider what was his mission upon earth. As all Christians will readily admit, this mission was the redemption of mankind, or at least the elect of them, from the fatal effects of what is popularly called the fall of man, and the restoration of them to the lost favor of God.

According to the teachings of the Bible, our first parents, Adam and Eve, were, originally, two naked savages, so inconceivably ignorant that they did not even know that they were naked; and, in this disgustingly degraded condition—in this, his own likeness and image—God intended that they should always remain. The serpent, however, or, as Dr. Clarke and some others have it, the ape, or, as still others have it, the devil—whatever that may have been—being a better friend to them than was their Maker, persuaded them to partake of that most necessary of all fruits, the fruit of the tree of knowledge. They did partake freely of that wonderful fruit, and yet, so far from dying on that very day, as God, to intimidate them, had declared that they certainly should, they lived right on for nearly a thousand more years, and then died, not from the effects of eating the fruit in question, but from extreme old age. They fell, however, from this their Godlike condition of ignorance and nakedness, to a condition that rendered possible, and even inevitable, the light, the knowledge, and the civilization of the present time.

. By this fearful fall, as it is strangely called, brought about by a serpent, or some other creature, which God himself had made, and which he had declared to be "very good," men lost the favor of God, became the objects of his most fearful wrath, the children of the devil, and the heirs of a never-ending hell. To redeem them, or, as I would prefer to express it, to rob them of the effects of this falsely so-called fall, to restore or reduce them to their original Godlike condition of ignorance and nakedness, was the mission of Jesus; and bravely did he labor to accomplish that mission. He strictly forbade his followers to sow, to reap, to make clothing, to build houses, or to take any thought whatever for the morrow, as to what they should eat, what they should drink, or wherewithal they should be clothed. He made it a damnable sin to lay up wealth, or even to retain that which might be obtained through inheritance. He discouraged industry of all kinds, and taught his followers to depend for subsistence upon the spontaneous productions of nature, which, as he assured them, and as he seemed himself to fully believe, God would never fail to abundantly supply. He himself strolled about the country in a filthy condition, without any certain means of support, wearing only such old garments as chanced to be thrown by the people to him as to any other tramp. He ate with unwashed hands, slept out of doors, and associated, on terms of perfect equality, with the very dregs of society. Sometimes he was almost starved—compelled to steal grain in the fields and eat it raw. Sometimes he grew so hungry that he became angry and cursed in a very foolish manner; cursed trees for not bearing fruit in winter for his benefit and that of other tramps. At other times, when he chanced to have an abundance of food given him, by his disgusting intemperance in eating and drinking, he acquired the decidedly unenviable distinction of being a "glutton and a wine-bibber."

In his principles, he was, to the fullest extent of the term, a *communist*. He would not himself possess any individual property of any kind, and he would not permit any of his followers to possess any such property. All must be *in common*. Indeed, to such an extent did he carry his communistic principles, that he would not himself acknowledge, and would not suffer any of his followers to acknowledge, even an individual father or any other individual relationship. No being that could not be recognized as *common*, the *communistic father* of them *all*, was permitted to be recognized as the father of any of them. So of the women, who were always regarded merely as a species of property; no individual was permitted to have the *exclusive* use or ownership of any of these. Like all other things, they belonged *in common* to the *entire community*, to "the *kingdom of God*," which was simply the church or the commune, and in which Jesus declared that "they neither *marry* nor are *given in marriage*." So long as they were permitted to be so, his followers were full *communists*. When anyone joined them, he had to sell all his "possessions and goods," and place the proceeds in the common treasury of the community. "They had *all things common*." In short, with all his good qualities, and I cheerfully admit that he possessed many of these, the life of Jesus was what would now probably be called the life of a *communistic vagrant* or *tramp*; and had his teachings and his example been fully carried out, mankind would, indeed, have been to-day fully restored to the God-like condition in which our first parents were before their memorable fall. We would all have been naked savages, but this fact would have been no drawback to our perfect happiness, since we would have been too ignorant to know that we were in that condition. The ignorance and barbarism that characterized what are known as the dark ages were the legitimate results of the partial carrying out by the people of the doctrines and the example of this famous communistic fanatic, Jesus. Indeed, all the light and knowledge

that constitute the civilization of the present time is due entirely to that which you stigmatize as *Infidelity*.

From all of this, it is clear that the Redeemership of Jesus depends upon the literal truthfulness of the entire absurd and incredible story of the creation. If there never was any such creation as that story describes; if there never were any such flat and stationary earth, solid sky or firmament, garden of Eden, tree of knowledge, mud-made man, bone-made woman, walking and talking serpent, etc., then, of necessity, there never could have been any such fall of man as is recorded in this story; and, if there never was any such fall, then, of equal necessity, there never could have been any redemption from the effects of such fall, or any such Redeemer as Jesus is represented as having been. You are compelled either to swallow the whole absurd story of the creation, in its strictly literal sense, or to admit that the Christian Religion is a monstrous imposition. I defy any escape from this conclusion, so embarrassing to the champions of that religion. When, therefore, in preceding lectures, I fully proved the entire story of the creation to be utterly false, I also, at the same time, virtually proved that, at best, the entire Christian Religion is founded upon an absurd pagan fable.

If, however, in order to save this religion, so profitable to our priests, we admit, as we certainly must, that the whole story of the creation is literally true; if we admit that there actually were such a flat and stationary earth, such a solid sky or firmament, such a tree of knowledge, such a mud-made man, such a bone-made woman, such a walking and talking serpent, such a fall of man, etc., then we have before us the rather remarkable case of an omniscient God, with a full foreknowledge of exactly what they would severally do and severally be, making a man, a woman, and a serpent, and pronouncing them "very good," and yet, at the same time, predetermining to go into an uncontrollable rage with them, and to eternally damn

them and all their posterity, for doing and for being just what he himself predetermined that they inevitably should do and should be.

Had it been possible for Adam, Eve, and the serpent to fail doing exactly what God foresaw that they would do, or to fail being exactly what he foresaw that they would be, then they probably would have thus failed. In that case, however, God would not have really foreseen anything at all concerning them. That which he thought he foresaw would never have come to pass, and then, so far from proving to be omniscient, he would have proved to be a mere guesser at future events, and a very poor guesser at that.

In order to actually foresee any future event, God must, of necessity, render it utterly impossible for that event not to occur. Of course, then, he himself must have predetermined that Adam, Eve, and the serpent inevitably should commit whatever sins and other acts he foresaw that they certainly would commit. At any rate, the Bible clearly teaches that, before the foundation of the world—before anybody but himself could have had anything to do in planning the future—God certainly did foresee, and certainly did predetermine, exactly who should be righteous and who should be unrighteous, who should be saved and who should be damned. Every man's character, then, as well as his final destiny, being thus, from all eternity, unalterably fixed, for him, by God himself, it evidently becomes utterly impossible for any man to avoid either the character or the final destiny which were thus predetermined for him, and for which alone he was created. God cannot possibly foresee anything except what *is to be*; and “what *is to be will be*.”

The Bible also teaches, as do all orthodox Christians, that, before the foundation of the world, God predetermined, not only that Jesus should be, but also that he should be the Redeemer of mankind, or, at least, of so many of them as were pre-elected to salvation. In order,

however, to thus predetermine this *Redeemership* of *Jesus*, it was absolutely necessary for God to also predetermine that *lost condition* of *mankind* which would render such a *Redeemer* necessary, and from which *Jesus* should redeem them. Without foreseeing such a *condition*, God could not possibly have foreseen the *need* of a *Redeemer*, and, consequently, would not have predetermined to provide such a *Redeemer*. As I have already said, however, in order to *foresee* such a *condition*, God himself must, of necessity, have *predetermined* for men that very *condition*. I defy any escape from these conclusions.

When, therefore, in the carrying out of his programme, God himself had caused men to fall, he promptly began to damn them for having fallen. All of this, of course, was just as he had foreseen that it would be, and just as he had predetermined that it should be. For about four thousand years, according to the chronology of the Bible, he seems to have devoted himself almost exclusively to the divine and delightful work of making men, and then killing and damning them. After having had millions of cattle, sheep, and goats butchered and roasted before him, to appease his wrath and gratify his olfactories—after having had whole nations of men, women, and children butchered—and some of them placed as roasts upon his own table, for being just what he himself had made them; after having, for the same reason, filled the vast, the indescribably horrible caverns of hell with billions upon billions of his own poor helpless creatures whom, before the foundation of the world, he had predetermined to torment for ever and ever in the fearful flames of fire and brimstone, he proceeded, according to his programme, to beget himself a son to act as the *Redeemer* of such individuals of the human race as were not already damned and as were not, from all eternity, preordained to damnation—of such individuals, in short, as had been eternally pre-elected to salvation, and who, consequently, did not need any such *Redeemer*. Having successfully accomplished the long-pre-

meditated feat of begetting himself a son upon a poor unmarried woman, he proposed that, if men would commit the horrible crime of murdering this inoffensive son, he would take them back into his favor, and would not any more punish them, or, at least, the elect of them, with eternal damnation, for the little fruit that Adam and Eve had eaten some forty centuries before. Having unalterably predetermined that men should murder his supposed son, he, of course, so controlled events that they did murder him. Then, as a reward for the commission of this atrocious crime, he made the murderers, or, at least, the elect of them, heirs of salvation, co-heirs with his own son whom they had murdered, but who, it seems, did not long remain murdered. Why God could not forgive men their sins and save them from salvation just as well without this murder as he could with it, I am not able to say. To me, this is one of the many mysteries of godliness. Ask any orthodox minister of the gospel, however, and he will doubtless explain the whole matter to your entire satisfaction. I could have done this when I was a lad of fourteen years. And now show me, if you can, in all pagandom, a doctrine more absurd or more atrocious than is this doctrine of the fall of man and the atonement for that fall. What doctrine could possibly exhibit God's character in a worse light?

In Gen. iii, 11, we read: "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" From this, it is clear that God did not intend that men should ever possess sufficient intelligence even to know that they were naked. And has he, since then, undergone any change for the better, and become a friend to human knowledge? If not, is he not, of necessity, still an enemy to such knowledge? And would not the redemption provided for us by such a God very naturally be a redemption or return from the light and knowledge that resulted from the fall, to the inconceivable darkness and ignorance of our paradisaical

state? Does not to redeem mean simply to purchase a return or a restoration? Could a redemption from the effects—the light and the knowledge of the world—consist in anything else than a return or restoration to the ignorance that preceded the fall?

In Gen. iii, 22–23, the “Lord God” or chief God says to the other Gods: “Behold, the man is become as *one* of *us*, to know good and evil: and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken.” These passages, which constitute positive proof of the former existence of a plurality of Gods, show conclusively why it was that God wished to keep men forever in the profoundest depths of ignorance. He perceived that a *very little knowledge* rendered men *like* the *Gods*, and that *much knowledge* would render them *superior* to the *Gods*. He therefore feared human intelligence, as well he might, and would doubtless rejoice, even now, to see men redeemed from that intelligence so dangerous to himself. So long as intelligence prevails among men, he can never feel sure that his throne will not be overturned. At any rate, as every intelligent minister of the gospel knows, the most ignorant of the people are the ones upon whom he always has depended for his most devout worshipers. The comparatively few intelligent men who have ever served him have almost invariably served for worldly gain. You should not, therefore, blindly take it for granted that the so-called redemption provided for us by this inveterate foe to human intelligence is intended to work for our good.

And now I wish to consider in what *sense* Jesus was the *son* of God. If in a figurative sense only, he bore this relationship to God, then he was only one of many such sons of God, and must, of necessity, like each of the others, have had a human father. If, on the other hand, he was literally the son of God, then, of necessity, God

must, in a strictly literal sense, have actually begotten him, just as a man begets a child, or a horse begets a colt. We will examine these two senses separately.

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the *sons of God* saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose” (Gen. vi, 1, 2). “Now there was a day when the *sons of God* came to present themselves before the Lord” (Job. i, 6). “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the *sons of God*” (John i, 12). “Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the *son of God*” (Luke iii, 38). From these, and a vast number of other similar passages, we learn that God had many sons. But in what sense were they his sons? Few, if any, of the champions of the Bible will claim that, in a literal sense, any of these parties were the sons of God. They were evidently mere men, all of whom, except Adam, had human fathers. They were evidently the sons of God only by adoption or election.

And is this the only sense in which Jesus was the son of God? That it is, clearly appears from many passages in the New Testament. In Matt. xxiii, 9, Jesus says: “And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father which is in heaven.” In order to understand this language correctly, you must take into consideration the important fact that it was spoken by one who was so radical in his *communistic* principles that he would not himself possess, and would not permit any of his followers to possess, *anything whatever* that could not be *equally* possessed by *all* the *balance* of the *community*. When you take this fact into consideration, and when you reflect that “no man . . . upon the earth” could be the common or commune father of the whole community, you can correctly understand why it was that Jesus himself never acknowledged his own father, and why it was that

he so strictly required all of his followers to utterly ignore their own respective fathers. In the commune of which he was the founder, "they had *all things common*," and *nothing*, not even one's *relationship to his own individual parents*, could be received into that *commune*, unless it could be made thus *common* to the *whole community*. In short, Jesus utterly abolished, or rather attempted to utterly abolish, the *individual family*, which he seems to have regarded as the germ, the nucleus, or the embryo of all clannism and sectarianism; of all *anti-communism* in general.

In ignoring his own earthly father, who could never have been the common or commune father of the whole community, and in acknowledging only his Heavenly Father, who could be the common or commune Father of all that saw fit to recognize him as such, Jesus did no more than he strictly commanded all other men to do, in respect to their own respective earthly fathers, and their common or commune Heavenly Father. For himself he claimed no nearer relationship to God than he required all of his followers to claim for themselves. As brethren, he and they were all to claim one common father. He did not pretend to deny that he himself and every other man had an earthly or individual father; but he regarded, and wished all others to regard, the tie that binds a man to his earthly father as no tie at all when compared with the tie that binds him to his Heavenly Father—to the Great Commune Father of all men.

In his own case, too, Jesus had another very excellent reason for not acknowledging an earthly or individual father. Having been born of an unmarried woman, he probably did not know who was his earthly father; and, if he did know, that knowledge was evidently a kind of family secret. Besides this, that father had entirely ignored any relationship to him, had neglected to support and educate him, and had left his mother to bear disgrace alone, or to escape it, if she could, by setting up the old

plea, by which many an unfortunate young woman before her had attempted to escape similar disgrace, that her child was the son of a God, and that she was still a virgin. Whether his mother did, or did not, ever set up for him any such claim, is a matter which we now have no means of determining. If she did, then it was but natural that, for her sake as well as for his own, he should do nothing to weaken the force of that claim.

Be all these things as they may, however, it is an undeniable fact that Jesus just as studiously avoided acknowledging an earthly *mother*, as he did acknowledging an earthly *father*; and, since there was then no deity, acknowledged by the Jews, that could be claimed as the common or commune mother of all men, he never recognized, and never required his followers to recognize, any mother at all. Under the circumstances, motherhood was something that could not enter, as an acknowledged element, into his perfect commune. In pursuance of his extreme communistic principles, therefore, he never did acknowledge that he was the son of Mary or of any other woman. When he addressed Mary at all, he simply called her "woman." He never did call her mother. And he acted thus toward her, not because he doubted that she was his mother, but simply because she could not be equally the common mother of his whole commune, of the whold ideal "kingdom of heaven," which he was laboring to establish on earth, and in which none of the non-commune kindred ties of this world were known; in which "they had all things common;" in which they neither married nor gave in marriage; in which no monopoly, no exclusive individual possession, not even that of a mother, was ever to be known; in which, consequently, few men would either know or care who might be their respective earthly or individual parents—especially their fathers—but in which all would be regarded as equally the children of one great, Common or Commune Father in Heaven.

"When one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and

thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, *Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?* And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren: for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. xii, 47-50). On this, and on every other occasion, Jesus utterly ignored all kindred ties according to the flesh. This he did, not because he had no such ties, but because he wished to lose sight of these individual or accidental, these non-commune ties, in what he regarded as the infinitely higher and stronger tie that bound him to God, the great Commune Father of all men, and to God's people, the church or great commune. In the same sense in which he denied his mother and his brethren, he denied his father, and in no other sense.

Had he been willing, under any circumstances, to acknowledge a kindred tie of an individual or non-commune character, he surely would at last have acknowledged his poor mother as she stood weeping at the foot of the cross upon which he was dying. Even then, however, true in death to the great communistic ideal to which he had devoted his life, he still refused to acknowledge any such tie. In that last awful hour, he still addressed her, not by the endearing term mother, which she doubtless longed to hear one time from his lips, but by the harsh term "woman," and called her the mother of another man to whom, by the ties of blood, she was in no way related. Referring her to that other man, he simply said: "Woman, behold thy son."

If, then, the fact that he never directly acknowledged an earthly father be taken as proof that he never had any such father, is not the fact that he never directly acknowledged an earthly mother bound to be taken as equally conclusive proof that he never had any such mother? Indeed, does not his non-acknowledgment constitute a far stronger proof of non-relationship, in the case of the

mother, than it does in the case of the father? To his father, who had been his mother's seducer, or who, at least, had never been her husband, and who had never acknowledged him, or in any way performed a father's duty toward him, he was bound by no ties of love, duty, or gratitude. There were no reasons why he should acknowledge such a father. Indeed, there were the very best of reasons why he should remain, just as he did remain, entirely silent in regard to that particular ancestor. Under such circumstances, then, the mere fact of his failure to ever mention his human father does not constitute any proof at all that he never had any such father. In regard to his mother, however, or his supposed mother, the case was very different. To her, he was bound by the strongest ties of love, duty, and gratitude. She had faithfully stood by him in all his sorrows. If, then, she was his mother, why did he never acknowledge her as such? Except his extreme communistic principles, which the champions of the Bible now generally deny that he ever possessed, what reasons were there why he should so constantly refuse to acknowledge such a mother, if, indeed, she was his mother? Does not the fact, then, of his constant and positive refusal, under such circumstances, to acknowledge such a mother constitute far stronger proof that he never had any such mother, than has ever been adduced to prove that he never had any human father?

Be all these things as they may, however, it is an undeniable fact that he never spoke of himself as anything else than a human being. On all occasions, he called himself the "Son of *Man*." He never called himself the Son of *God*, and positively disclaimed the possession of any power not possessed in an equal degree by other men. In John xiv, 12, he says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the *works* that *I* do shall *he* do also; and *greater* works than these shall *he* do." Since, then, he never claimed to be the Son of God, in anything like a literal sense, and since his works were not superior

—were not equal, in fact, to the works of men—what proofs have we that he was anything more than a man? If there be any such proofs, will my opponents please name them?

When, with reference to himself, he spoke of God, he constantly used the expression, “*my* Father.” When, however, with reference to his disciples and others, he spoke of God in exactly the same sense, he just as constantly used the expression, “*your* Father.” In John xx, 17, he says: “Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to *my* Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto *my* Father and *your* Father, and to *my* God and *your* God.” Here the expressions, “*your* Father” and “*your* God,” being used in exactly the same sense as are the expressions, “*my* Father” and “*my* God,” must, of necessity, express exactly the same relationship to God. In whatever sense, then, Jesus was the Son of God, his brethren were also the Sons of God. And since his relation to God was thus exactly the same as was theirs, his relation to man must, of necessity, have also been exactly the same as was theirs. If, then, they were mere men, made Sons of God by adoption, could he have been any more than a mere man, made a Son of God in the same manner? That he was merely a very holy man, made a Son of God thus by adoption, was certainly the view of the matter held by a large portion, if not a majority, of the Christians of the first three centuries.

The fact that Jesus is sometimes spoken of as the “*only begotten*” son of God proves nothing at all in regard to his own real paternity, or in regard to that of any other person. As every Bible critic knows, the expression, “*only begotten*,” is generally, if not always, used, in the Bible, simply to express the most dearly beloved. A man, with a dozen sons, might have, and generally did have, one “*only begotten*” or most dearly beloved son. The case was exactly the same, too, when all the sons chanced to be sons only by adoption. Although the foster-father had not really begotten any of them, nevertheless the one of

them that he most dearly loved was still spoken of as his “only begotten son”—as one whom he loved as if he had begotten him, and him alone. Although Abraham had certainly begotten another son, Ishmael, yet Isaac is constantly spoken of as that old patriarch’s “only begotten son,” as one that he loved as if he had never begotten any other. And thus it was with Jesus. He was simply the most dearly beloved of all of God’s many adopted sons. His literal relationship to God was precisely the same as was that of his brethren, God’s other adopted sons.

It was not until the year 325, at the first council of Nice, that the honor (?) of being literally the Son of God was definitely conferred upon Jesus. And even then, it was conferred upon him simply as a compromise with paganism, and not because those who conferred it really believed that he actually was, in a literal sense, the “begotten Son of God.” The vote, too, by which this doubtful compromise honor was conferred, was very far from unanimous. Indeed, from all that I can learn upon the subject, it was not even a majority vote of the whole council. A large number of delegates, under the leadership of the celebrated Arius, bravely voted against the idolatrous proposition to confer divine honors upon a human being, such as they all believed Jesus to have been. Many others refused to vote at all. They would not vote for the idolatrous proposition in question, and they dared not vote against it. They were intimidated by that atrocious monster-murderer, Constantine, the Emperor, who had had himself made chairman of that council, and who had gone into it with an avowed determination, at all hazards, to compel the council to engraft upon the Christian Religion several of the most popular doctrines of paganism—of the religion which he had always loved and defended. Among these doctrines was the one now under consideration, that the Gods sometimes condescended to beget offspring upon human mothers. Until then, Christianity had been, like Judaism, a strictly monotheistic religion.

To such a religion, however, the polytheistic pagans could not be readily converted. They wanted a plurality of Gods, and they specially clung to the doctrine of demi-gods or mediators, to which they had always been accustomed. In order, therefore, to gather into the Lord's garner, the rich harvests growing upon the broad and fertile fields of paganism, it was found necessary to engraft this purely pagan doctrine upon Christianity. And this engrafting was accomplished by the plurality vote that conferred the honors of demi-Godship upon Jesus, the son of Mary. Constantine, who had recently become a partial convert to Christianity, but who still fondly clung to the pagan doctrine in question, on his own account as well as on that of all other pagans, determined, as I have already said, at all hazards, to have this old doctrine engrafted upon his new religion. And, by means to which none but the most bloody-minded monsters ever resort, he accomplished his unworthy purpose.

When he took his seat as chairman of the council in question, his hands were still reeking with the warm life-blood of many innocent persons, including several members of his own family, whom, in the most atrocious manner, he had recently murdered. Having taken his seat as presiding officer, he at once proceeded to inspire the members of that council with a due sense of the fearful danger to themselves that would be incurred by those who should have the temerity to oppose any of his favorite propositions. This he accomplished by promptly murdering, on the slightest provocation, his own son, Crispus, who is said to have been an excellent young man, greatly loved by the people.

Having thus, by this atrocious murder, fully established, beyond any safe contradiction, both his capacity and his fitness to run that council to suit himself, he at once, as a matter of course, became its controlling spirit. Indeed, it may be truthfully said that he became the council itself. Those delegates—and to the honor of humanity, there were

many such, who dared to oppose his wishes, did so at the almost certain cost of their own lives. Under such circumstances, such a reign of terror, many who differed with him dared not oppose him. Most of those who were thus intimidated, declined to vote at all. In fear for their lives, the balance, in direct violation of their own convictions, voted with those who sustained his favorite doctrines. With the aid of these moral cowards, those delegates who were his mere instruments, who were still semi-pagans at heart, and whose votes were all virtually cast by himself, were enabled to succeed in their efforts to thoroughly paganize the Christian Religion. And it was by a vote of these moral cowards and these semi-pagan instruments of an atrocious murderer, and by that vote alone, that Jesus was made literally the Son of God, and was made to take the same place in the Christian Religion that was occupied in the pagan religions by Chrishna, Buddha, Prometheus, and other supposed demi-gods. With the simple change, therefore, of only a few names, the songs which had hitherto been sung in honor of Prometheus, or of some other pagan deity, were now sung in honor of the new-made Christian deity, Jesus. "Alas! and did our Savior bleed?" etc., is an old song formerly sung in the pagan temples in honor of Prometheus. Christianity, therefore, as we now have it, is principally nothing more nor less than a mixture of the old pagan mythologies of India, Greece, Rome, and other countries. As the English language is almost entirely composed of words selected from other languages, so the Christian Religion is almost entirely composed of doctrines and deities selected from other religions. Its great central idea consists in the idolatrous worship of a mere man who was made a deity by the strictly partisan votes of less than two hundred men, uninspired by anything higher or nobler than a fear for their own personal safety, or a desire to win the favor of that model of monsters, Constantine their emperor.

As I have already said, when speaking of himself, Jesus constantly called himself the "*Son of man.*" This was especially the case when he was speaking with reference to his *own* origin, or the order of beings to which he belonged. The following passage is an example: "The *Son of man* came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a *man*, gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt. xi, 19) Could he, by any possibility, have been thus the "*Son of man,*" without being himself a *man*? If he was not a *man*, why did he never correct the mistake of his disciples and others who constantly called him a *man*, and treated him as such; who never thought of such a thing as offering to him any portion of that honor and that worship which they were wont to offer to the *one God* in whom they believed.

But, if Jesus believed himself to be, like other men, a human being—the son of a human father—why, you ask, did he not say so in plain words? Why did he designate himself by the somewhat vague and general expression, "*the Son of man?*" I might, perhaps, answer these questions, with sufficient precision to satisfy the propounders of them, by asking the following questions, which are of exactly the same nature: If Jesus believed himself to be literally the Son of God, why did he never say so in plain words? Why did he never directly call himself the Son of God at all? I will not, however, stop with the asking of these questions. I will answer your questions in full. Since, in all conceivable respects, Jesus *seemed* to be a *man*, and since no one ever *mistook* him for anything *else*, he had no more occasion to declare himself to be a *man*, and nothing but a *man*, than *I* have to make the *same declaration* in regard to *myself*. In regard to his supposed *Godship*, however, the case was very different. Since he did not, in any conceivable respect, *seem* to be a *God*, and since no one ever seemed to *regard* him as one, he did have occasion to declare in plain words that he *was* one, if, indeed, *such* was the case. Since God had many sons by *adoption*,

it was necessary, too, that Jesus should have distinctly declared that, unlike all of these other sons, *he*, and *he alone*, was the son of God in a strictly *literal* sense; that *he* had been *literally begotten* by God, just as a *man* is *begotten* by his *father*, and that *he* never *had* any *human father*. Having, however, entirely failed to make this important declaration, and having, on the contrary, often declared that he was the "Son of man," and, consequently, a human being, what right have you to dispute his declaration, and to claim, as you do, that he was *not* the son of *man*, when he said that he *was*?

In declaring himself to be the "Son of man"—the word *man* being evidently used, in its generic or general sense, to include the whole human race—Jesus distinctly declared that he was a child or offspring of the human race, and, consequently, a member of that race. For excellent reasons, already noticed, he never mentioned the particular man of whom he was directly the son or offspring. No matter who that individual man may have been, however, he was undeniably a part of the genus, *man*—of the human race. Whatever, therefore, was produced directly by that part of the human race, evidently constituted a part of the general production of the race as a whole. As an apple, although directly produced by a small twig, might very properly claim to be the fruit of the tree to which the twig belonged, and as it might very properly claim as brethren all the other apples borne in like manner by that common tree—that great commune parent—no matter by how many different little twigs they may have been directly produced, so Jesus, in pursuance of his great *communistic ideal*, utterly ignoring the little and uncertain *twig* of a father—the little *twig* of a mother, too, that had directly produced him—very naturally, and very properly, claimed to be the "Son of *man*," the child or offspring of the human race, the fruit of the great *commune parent-tree* to which those *two* little *twigs* belonged. Very correctly, too, from his *communistic* standpoint, he regarded as brethren

all the other individuals, borne, as he was, upon that great commune parent-tree, "man," the genus homo, no matter by how many different little individual parent twigs they may have been directly produced. Have I not now fully and fairly answered your questions? And have I not fully and fairly proved that, by nature, Jesus was just as purely human, on the side of both parents, as are we ourselves; and that, except in a figurative sense, he never was, and never claimed to be, anything but a human being?

If, however, as paganized Christians now generally teach, Jesus never had any human father—if he was, in fact, the literally begotten Son of God—then the question naturally arises, how did God manage to beget him? The pagans, from whom, as I have already shown, the idea of hybrid or half-breed Gods was borrowed, found no difficulty whatever in regard to the *modus operandi* by which the Gods were enabled to beget that kind of offspring. They simply had the Gods materialize themselves, *a la mode* Katie King—that is, assume bodily forms, similar to the bodies of men, and instantly constructed for the occasion, and then had them, by means of these assumed bodies, hold genuine sexual intercourse with the women whom they had chosen to be the mothers of their respective mongrel offspring. Such intercourse was generally, if not always, held in the temple of the God that so graciously condescended to thus embrace one of the daughters of men. Having selected a beautiful young woman, always a virgin, of course, and noted for her blind devotion to his particular form of religion, the God, through a priest, would make known to her his wishes, and request her to come and remain over night in the temple, promising, in case of her compliance, to embrace her in a bodily form, and to confer upon her the wonderful blessing of making her the mother of his deific offspring. Sometimes a virgin had to make many such visits to the temple before the desired result was obtained, and she was made the pros-

pective mother of a half-breed God. The only serious drawback to this method was the fact that the young half-breed was generally birth-marked with a striking resemblance to some one of the lusty priests of the temple in which its conception had so miraculously taken place.

Instead of thus materializing themselves, however, some of the Gods of the pagans preferred to take possession of the body of a living man, always a lusty priest, of course, and, through that man's sexual organs, beget his young Jesuses and other young Gods; just as spirits are said now to sometimes take possession of living persons, and, through the hands of those persons, who are called mediums, to write messages to the living from their departed friends. In this case, however, the child was nearly always birth-marked with a remarkable resemblance to the priest with whose sexual organs the God had begotten him. This unavoidable birth-mark was a great misfortune.

As I showed, in a former lecture, the God of the Bible, like these pagan deities, used, at times, to have a body resembling the body of a man. With such a body he might, perhaps, very easily have begotten a child—just as easily as he did walk, eat, wrestle, etc., with it. Before he had seen fit to beget any child, however, his worshipers very ungenerously stripped him of every vestige of his body, and reduced him, as I also showed, to the unenviable and utterly inert condition of empty space—of a perfect vacuum. They left him neither body nor parts, neither boundaries nor organization, and now, in direct contradiction to the teachings of many of the plainest passages of the Bible, they solemnly swear that, to the best of their knowledge and belief, nothing of a material or substantial nature, such as would be requisite for the constitution of a body, ever entered into his composition.

Notwithstanding all these things, however, the champions of the Bible represent this boundless, bodiless, shapeless, and motionless God—this perfect vacuum—this

utter nonentity, as a *male*, and unblushingly declare that, although he was a chronic old bachelor, he was the actual father of a certain Miss Mary ——'s baby. They not only teach that these things are absolutely true, but also that a belief in them, on our part, is absolutely necessary to salvation. They unceremoniously consign to eternal torments all of us poor infidels who find ourselves utterly unable to believe such ridiculous nonsense. And yet, if a Miss Smith, a Miss Brown, or some other Miss of their own neighborhood were to become a mother in exactly the same way that Miss Mary —— did, how many of these same good and faithful Christians—these intolerant God-damners of infidels, would believe that the young Smith, the young Brown, or the young bastard of any other name, was a God, or would worship him as such? Would they not be almost sure to imagine that they perceived in the child a resemblance to some preacher, or other gentleman of the neighborhood? And if they themselves, after seeing such a child, and after conversing with its mother—after informing themselves as far as possible, by direct investigation, in regard to all the circumstances of its conception, its birth, etc.—if they themselves, I repeat, on such first-class evidence, could not believe the child to be a God, upon what principles of justice can they condemn us poor infidels to everlasting flames because we are unable to believe the same thing, on purely hearsay evidence handed down, for nearly twenty centuries, through the most corrupt of channels?

In order to become an actual *father*, such as the champions of the Bible declare that he did become, God, of necessity, had to actually *beget* a child; and, in order to thus *beget* a child, he had, of equal necessity, to possess *organs* of *sex* and to *use* those *organs*, in the purely physical *act* called copulation, upon the corresponding *organs* of the child's mother. This is the only act that can constitute a begetting. These are facts which no intelligent person will attempt to dispute. And yet, on pain of eternal dam-

nation, we are required to implicitly believe that a child was actually begotten by this God of yours ; by something utterly without body, parts, passions, boundaries, or material composition ; by something exactly equivalent to empty space—to a perfect vacuum ; by something so vast in extent that light, traveling ten billion times ten billion ages, would be no nearer to the end of it than we are now ; by something which, having no room at all to move in, is, of necessity, utterly incapable of the slightest motion, in whole or in part, in any conceivable direction.

And, now, in order to enable us poor infidels to believe this monstrous baby-story and to thus escape eternal damnation, will not some one of these good men who feel themselves to be specially called of God to preach the gospel, and to save souls, be so kind as to explain to us exactly how God did manage to *beget* the baby in question? Although we do not know just what it is to be damned, yet we frankly confess that, from all we have ever heard of it, from those who do know, we would a little rather not undergo the operation ; and since faith in this baby-story is our only means of salvation, we would like to believe the story if we only could.

The champions of the Bible should have permitted their adopted God to retain the body which, according to the testimony of the Bible, he certainly once possessed, until after he had begotten this very necessary baby. As the case now stands, having themselves dissipated him into absolutely empty space, it devolves upon them to prove that in this utterly empty condition, he not only could, but actually did, perform the wonderful feat of literally begetting the child in question, without even the slightest trace of anything to beget it with. This must, indeed, be one of the mysteries of Godliness.

Does God's sexual power exist equally everywhere throughout his entire infinite extent? If it does, if it exists all around our own women, just as it existed around the mother of Jesus, what is to hinder it from having the

same effect upon them that it had upon her? Are they not liable, at any time, to become the mothers of little half-breed Gods? And how are we to know our own offspring? What assurance have we that any of our supposed sons are of our own begetting? May they not all be little Jesuses begotten in the very same way that Miss Mary ——'s little Jesus was begotten?

If, on the other hand, God's sexual power does not exist equally everywhere throughout his entire infinite extent, at what particular point in himself, and in infinite space, with which he is exactly identical, does that power exist, and in what respect does that point differ from any other point? In other and plainer words, which the vast importance of the subject justifies me in using, where was the seed or life-germ, from which Jesus sprang, produced; by what agencies was it produced; of what kind of material was it composed; whence did that material come; and by what means was that germ finally conveyed to the proper spot in the body of the mother? These are all fair, proper, and important questions, but who can answer them? To place God's sexual power in some particular part of him is to give him organization.

The great commentator, Adam Clarke, gives it as his opinion that the life-germ in question must have been *created*, all out of nothing, at the proper spot inside of the mother's body. Mr. Clarke, however, overlooks the important fact that such a *creating* of a child would be no *begetting* of it at all. In that case, God would have been simply the child's *creator*, not it's *father*. The child, too, being a *created* being, would, of necessity, have been also a *finite* being. It could not possibly have been either God himself, or a being equal unto God himself, as Jesus is claimed by his worshipers to have been. God could not have created himself. Indeed, a child created in that manner would not necessarily have made a man in any respect superior to one created in the manner that Adam was. It would be just as reasonable to claim that God

was the father of the ape, the ass, the devil, or anything else that he ever created, as it would have been to claim that he was the father of such a created baby. It would be just as reasonable and proper, too, to worship, as a God, the ape, the ass, the devil, or any other created thing, as it would have been to worship, as a God, this created baby. How, then, *did* God *beget* that *baby*?

Of necessity, there must have been a particular moment just previous to which there was no life-germ in the womb of that child's mother, and immediately after which there was such a life-germ in her womb. By what process, then, was this change made in her condition? Did she herself know just when this change took place? If she did know this, by what means was she enabled to know it? Who can tell?

Of equal necessity, too, the life-germ in question must have been originally produced either within that woman's body, or without it. If within her body, then, of necessity, it could never have been produced by a *male*. In this case, the child, of course, not having been ever begotten, could not have had any father at all. This would have been simply a case of spontaneous conception to which our own women would be equally liable. This absurd hypothesis, then, would just as thoroughly ungod Jesus as would the proving of him to have been the son of a human father.

If, on the other hand, that life-germ was produced somewhere outside of that woman's body, then, of necessity, it must have been literally conveyed from the place in which it was produced to the proper spot in her body. By what means, then, I again ask, was it conveyed to that spot, and from what point in infinite space was it conveyed? Being itself of material composition, and being designed for a material receptacle, could it possibly have been conveyed to that receptacle by any other than a material conductor? What, then, was that conductor, and by whom was it operated? Our priests should answer these questions.

It is a fact, which no intelligent person will pretend to dispute, that the production of such life-germs is a function of the male sex alone. In order, however, to be capable of producing such life-germs, the male, whether he be a God, a man, an ape, or an ass, must, of necessity, possess organs of sex—organs specially adapted to the production of such germs. Indeed, without a special physical organization to constitute sex, no such thing as sex could possibly exist. It is also a well known fact that, in order to beget offspring, the sexual organs of the male must, of necessity, in all cases, be so adapted to the corresponding organs of the female, and so brought into contact with them, that the life-germ, uninjured, may be transferred from the former set of organs to the latter. The act, or rather the peculiar series of actions, by which the male brings his organs of sex into the proper intimate contact with the corresponding organs of the female, and by which he transfers to the proper spot in her body the life-germ of a new individual, is called begetting offspring, and is the only act or series of actions, that, in a literal sense, ever is or ever could be so called. By no other possible act, can the male, among viviparous animals like men, ever literally beget offspring or become fathers. If, then, God ever did literally beget a child and thereby become a father, and this literal begetting—this genuine sexual intercourse on his part with the child's mother—is the only form of begetting that would render a human father unnecessary, and render the child really a God, he must, of necessity, just like a man, an ape, or an ass, when begetting offspring, have literally performed the peculiar act, or series of actions, which I have just been describing.

In order, however, to be able to perform this act, his organs of sex had, of necessity, to be adapted, like those of a man, to the corresponding organs of the woman upon whom the act was performed. Since, therefore, hers were material organs of a certain size and form, his must, of necessity, have also been material organs, and of just the

size and shape, too, to adapt them to hers. No mere spiritual, shadowy, or imaginary male sexual organs on his part would have answered the purpose ; nor would organs corresponding in size and in shape—or, rather, in want of shape—with his own infinitely extensive and utterly shapeless self. Indeed, the life-germ from which Jesus sprang, being the nucleus or embryo of a material body, and being itself composed of matter, could not possibly have had any other than a material source, and could not possibly have been conveyed by any other than physical or mechanical means from the place in which it was produced to the proper spot for development within the woman's body. In what respect, then, could the body of Jesus's father have differed from that of a man? If it had differed in any respect whatever, would there not, of necessity, have been a corresponding difference between the life-germ which, as an effect, proceeded from it, and the life-germ, which, as an effect, proceeds from the body of a man? Could unlike causes produce other than unlike effects? And, if the body of Jesus had been developed from a life-germ different from the life-germ of a man, would not his body itself—that same life-germ—simply developed, have been bound to differ, in a corresponding degree, from the body of a man?

Of necessity, Jesus must have been a God, a man, or a cross between a God and a man. Of equal necessity, therefore, his body must have been the body of a God, the body of a man, or a cross between those two bodies. According to all orthodox teachings, however, of modern times, no true God has any body. I suppose, therefore, that no truly orthodox champion of the Bible will think of claiming that the body of Jesus was either the body of a God, or a cross between the body of a God and the body of a man. In other words, I take it to be conceded on all hands that the body of Jesus was purely a human body. Indeed, if his body was not human, what was there human about him? Dare the champions of the Bible claim that

the thing incarnated—his soul, his very self—was human, or of human origin?

But what was that human body of Jesus ; what could it have been, but a fully developed human spermatozoon or life-germ? And could such a spermatozoon or life-germ have possibly proceeded from any other than a human source? And does a life-germ, in its process of development, ever entirely lose its original nature? Does the life-germ of a potato for instance, ever develop into the body of a pure apple-tree, or the life-germ of an apple into the body of a pure potato plant? Does the life-germ of a sheep ever develop into the body of a pure ass, or the life-germ of an ass into the body of a pure sheep? So of Gods and men. If they really be entirely different orders of beings, as the champions of the Bible all admit that they are, is it reasonable to suppose that a life-germ of the one was ever developed into a pure body of the other? A man may *make* a *God*, and a *God* may *make* a *man*; but neither of them can possibly *beget* the *other*. Neither of them can possibly beget anything but a being of his own order. A God could beget an ape or an ass, and be its father, just as easily as he could beget a man and be his father. The father is the cause. The son is the effect. And as the cause is, so must the effect be.

Be all these things as they may, however, the body of Jesus, as I have already shown, was a purely human body, a fully developed human spermatozoon or life-germ. This fact being established, it follows, as a matter of necessity, that all the functions of his body were purely human functions. His eyes, his ears, his stomach, etc., must, of necessity, have performed precisely the same functions as are performed respectively by the same organs in any other human body. So of his purely human brain. It could not possibly have given forth, as its function, any other than purely human thoughts, feelings, and desires. So also of his purely human organs of sex. With these, he could doubtless have begotten sons and daughters.

These sons and daughters, however, would all have been men and women, not Gods and Goddesses. Dare the champions of the Bible deny any of these plain truths? If not, what was Jesus, what could he have been, corporally at least, but a purely human being?

If, however, the champions of the Bible do dare dispute these truths, and especially those in regard to the sexual organs and sexual powers of Jesus, then, of necessity, they are compelled to choose one or the other horn of the following dilemma: They must either charge Jesus with having had less power than has an ordinary man, with having been utterly impotent sexually, with having been utterly incapable of begetting offspring at all, or else they must admit that he was capable of begetting an indefinite number of young Gods and Goddesses, who, in their turn, would, in like manner, have also been capable of still further increasing the number of beings of their own order. If they choose the first horn of this dilemma, and bring the very grave charge of utter sexual impotence against Jesus, then it devolves upon them to prove the truth of this charge, and to prove that Jesus *lied* when he said: "*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*" If they choose the other horn, then it devolves upon them to say whether all the children, grandchildren, etc.—millions though there might have finally been of them—that might have finally proceeded from him, would have been so many distinct beings, or whether they would all have been only one single God, just as they now teach that Jesus, and his father, and another God—a friend of theirs—all constitute only one single God. The fact, if it be a fact, that Jesus did not beget any offspring, does not make any difference so far as the argument is concerned. If he was *capable of begetting* them, then they were evidently *capable of existing*. Their existence, therefore, was once a possible, if not a probable, contingency, and whatever is thus clearly possible or probable, is always fairly supposable in an argument. What, then, would the posterity of

Jesus have been had he seen fit to beget any children? Who can tell?

Grossly absurd as is the doctrine that Jesus was literally the begotten son of a God, it is, if possible, rendered a thousand times more absurd by making Jesus—as nearly all the champions of the Bible do make him—to have been his own father—the very self-same God by whom he was himself begotten. This doctrine is undeniably the very essence of orthodox Christianity, and yet all intelligent persons, except the priests who are paid for preaching it, can see that it is also the very essence of absurdity. Just as reasonably might you say of an ape, an ass, or a man, that he himself is the very self-same ape, ass, or man that begot him. If, in a literal sense, a God could beget himself a son, without thereby increasing the number of Gods, then, on the same principle, an ape, an ass, or a man could, in the same sense, beget himself a son, without thereby increasing the number of apes, asses, or men. If two or more Gods could be only one God, as most of the champions of the Bible teach that they are, then two or more apes could certainly be only one ape, two or more asses only one ass, and two or more men only one man. All of these things are evidently possible, if any of them are.

Every intelligent person, however, knows that, in begetting himself a son, a God, an ape, an ass, or a man must, of necessity, start into existence an entirely new individual of his own order of beings. If, then, God ever did beget himself a son at all, he must, of necessity, have thereby increased the number of distinct and independent Gods. And if he ever did this, then we undeniably have a plurality of Gods, just as had the old pagans. Like those pagans, too, we have the means within our reach to so increase the number of Gods that, if he so desires it, every man may have one God or more of his own. Who of you dare charge God with having become sexually impotent? Who of you dare say that, if he saw fit to do so, he could

not beget countless millions of young Gods. And if he can do so, what proof have you that he has not done so, and will not yet do so?

Nearly all the champions of the Bible, however, of the present day, are opposed to this unlimited increase of the number of the Gods. Seeing, therefore, that, if they permit God to beget one distinct young God, they open the way for him to beget as many more as he may please, they almost unanimously agree to teach that, when begetting his so-called son, Jesus, he did not impart to the mother the life-germ of a *new and distinct individual*, but conveyed his *entire self* into her womb, and there had *himself* clothed in human flesh. A strange begetting truly, for the entire person of the male to thus fall, or crawl, into the womb of the female with whom he was holding sexual intercourse! She must have been a Brobdignagian, and he a Lilliputian.

In order, however, to perform this wonderful feat, he had, of necessity, to draw himself in, on every side, from the illimitable universe, to render himself finite in his size or extent—in short, to compress himself into a spermatozoon or life-germ—into a particle of matter so exceedingly small as to be utterly invisible to the unaided sight of men. If he conveyed himself to the womb of that woman at all, he must, of necessity, have conveyed himself thither in his *entirety*. Had he remained abroad in the universe, the same as before, or had he conveyed only an infinitesimal portion of himself to the womb of that woman, it would evidently not have been *himself* at all that was born of her under the name of Jesus. Picture yourself, then, with a powerful microscope, searching for your God, in the form of a spermatozoon or life-germ, just as you would search for animalculæ in a drop of water, or for trichinæ in an extremely small bit of old sausage. If you can conceive of your God in this condition, then you can begin to form a just conception of the unparalleled absurdities of

the Christian Religion. If you would be a Christian, be blind.

And now, let me ask, who ruled the universe while God was thus compressed into a microscopic particle of matter ; while he was undergoing the slow process of gestation ; while he was a little, helpless, toothless, crying babe, wrapped in swaddling-clothes ; while he was suffering from teething, from dysentery, from measles, from whooping-cough, etc. ? Besides this, since, as you teach, all things are possible with God, why could he not just as easily have reduced himself to two or to three life-germs and been born twins or triplets ; or to ten thousand life-germs, and have been born of ten thousand different virgins ? At any rate, since, as you teach, he is no respecter of persons—since, in his sight, one race and one color are as good as another—why could he not just as easily and just as properly have entered into the womb of some African virgin, and had himself born a woolly-headed, thick-lipped, flat-nosed, protruding-jawed, spindle-shanked, long-heeled darkey, with the exceedingly offensive odor peculiar to the negro race ? If, in his infinite wisdom, he had seen fit to be born thus a pure darkey, how many of you would now be willing to worship him as a God in that form ?

Be all these things as they may, however, we certainly are required, on pain of eternal damnation—whatever that may be—to implicitly believe that the infinite sum of all the forces eternally inhering in matter—the infinite sum of all the forces that rule the universe, and produce all the phenomena of nature—the infinite sum of all the forces that constitute what is usually called God—actually did thus reduce itself to an animalcule utterly invisible to the naked eye ; that, while in this microscopic form, by a process called begetting itself a son, it actually did convey its entire self into the woman ; that it actually did possess all the properties of a human spermatozoon or life-germ, and no other properties ; that, in the womb of

that woman, it actually did undergo the process of gestation ; that it actually was born a little helpless baby ; that like any other baby, it actually did have to live on milk, and to take soot tea, soothing syrup, paregoric, etc. ; that, like any other baby, it actually did squirm and squall when suffering from colic, or from any other of the thousand ills to which human flesh is heir ; that, as it grew larger, like any other boy, it actually did often go home bellowing because some larger boy had blacked its eye or smashed its nose ; and a thousand other things equally absurd. On the same penalty, we are required, moreover, to believe that it did and suffered all these things for the express purpose of finally having itself put to death to appease its own wrath, which, as I have already explained, had been terribly aroused, thousands of years before, by our first parents, when they ate some fruit, which it had forbidden them to eat, but which it nevertheless intended that they should eat.

We are still further required to believe that, while in the limited form of a man, this utterly illimitable power often addressed itself as its own father, while, at the same time, it claimed to be the “son of (a) man ;” that it daily offered up prayers to itself ; that it claimed to possess no powers except such as it had received from itself ; that it finally had itself put to death, although it could not die, and then ascended up to heaven—whatever and wherever that may be—where it had been all the time ; that, although it never had any hand or other bodily part, it nevertheless took a seat at its own right hand, where it still sits interceding with itself for sinners ; that this was all a divine scheme, stratagem, or trick devised and executed for the express purpose of cheating the devil out of his just dues, by snatching from his clutches and saving in heaven men who, according to every principle of justice and fitness, ought to go hell, whatever and wherever that may be ; that, without this wonderful scheme, stratagem, or trick, the power in question would have found it abso-

lutely necessary to eternally damn the whole human race ; and that, even with the scheme, it is compelled to damn all those who are too intelligent to believe all of these absurdities. Since none but fools can believe these things, who but fools can hope to be saved ?

And now I wish to examine the evidence upon which rests this fundamental doctrine of the Christian Religion, this wonderful story of God's literal incarnation in the womb of a woman whom he himself had made. The only evidence we have upon the subject is found in certain books of the New Testament called Gospels ; and these books, four in number, plainly contradict one another in almost every particular pertaining to this matter. These contradictions clearly prove that the writings of some of these books are certainly false ; and, since we do not know which ones of them are false, we cannot possibly know which ones are true. Indeed, although we have positive proof that some of them are false, we have no proof at all that any of them are true. Since we do not know when any of these books were written, by whom they were written, in what language they were written, or for what purpose they were written, we cannot be sure that there is a word of truth in any of them. All of these facts have been fully proved in former lectures. For the present, accepting these writings as they have reached us through a thousand corrupt channels, what do they prove in regard to the matter under consideration ? Of the four Gospels now extant, two, Mark and John, are almost entirely silent upon the subject. The other two, Matthew and Luke, almost uniformly contradict each other all the way through.

The author of Matthew, whose name and character are both totally unknown to us, bases the whole doctrine of the incarnation of God, or the immaculate conception of Jesus, upon a *dream* which he says was dreamed by an obscure and superstitious individual by the name of Joseph. This man was the affianced husband of the woman in whose womb this so-called incarnation of God is said to

have taken place. Admitting, however, that the author reported the dream just as he heard it, and that, through a thousand devious and corrupt channels, his report has reached us unchanged, of what value is that report? Since the dreamer alone could have known and told his dream, his utterly unsupported word was the only authority upon the subject which the author could possibly have had. And of what value was such authority? What do we know of the dreamer's character for veracity? Was not he a deeply interested party? Was not his dream story, if believed by the people, calculated, better than anything else, to get himself and his affianced bride out of a serious difficulty into which they had imprudently fallen?

According to the laws of the country, it became Joseph's duty, as the affianced husband of this woman who was called Mary, to put her to death, or to inflict upon her some other heavy penalty for the offense of which her detected pregnancy was *prima facie* evidence that she had been guilty. Being, however, a man of very kind disposition, and being deeply in love with this young woman, who is said to have been very beautiful, and to have borne, until then, a spotless reputation, being, too, probably, himself the father of her unborn babe, he could not find it in his heart to perform the cruel duty of inflicting death, or any other severe punishment, upon her. He preferred to forgive her, and to still hold her to the marriage engagement that existed between them. Having doubtless heard her story of her offense, if he did not already know it, he felt more inclined to pity her than to blame her and to punish her. But how could he, in the face of an indignant public, take to his arms a dishonored woman, and make her the step-mother of the children he already had and the probable mother of children yet to be born to him? Besides this, unless he could save her from becoming disgraced in the eyes of the public, his kind intentions toward her would have been of no avail. Some other party would have had inflicted upon her the punishment which he de-

clined to inflict. Everything depended upon his saving her from disgrace in the eyes of the public. If he could only save her from this, all would yet be well.

Since, therefore, at that time, dreams were in high repute among the Jews, as was also the doctrine that Gods sometimes condescended to beget deific offspring upon human mothers, what could have been more natural, under the circumstances in which he and Mary found themselves placed, than that Joseph should invent and solemnly report just such a dream as the one in question? Could he make this stratagem succeed, he would thereby not only save Mary from disgrace and probable death, but would also render his proposed marriage with her honorable in the eyes of the people. Indeed, he would do more than this. He would place his own name and those of his wife and her child upon the undying pages of fame. And why should not this stratagem be made to succeed? Had it not been made to succeed in the cases of many other reputed virgins, the mother of Chrishna, the mother of Prometheus, etc., who had been found in the same condition? At any rate, since the dream, even in case of failure, could do no harm, the chances of success certainly justified the attempt. Joseph accordingly dreamed the dream in question, just as you or I would have dreamed it, had we been in his place. This I regard as the most rational explanation of that wonderful dream story.

Suppose, however, that Joseph really did dream such a dream, what was that dream worth? If one of us should dream a similar dream, concerning some unfortunate young woman of our own neighborhood, of how much value as evidence would our own dream be. And can Joseph's dream possibly be any better evidence to us in such a case than our own would be? What is a dream? Simply an embodiment of the thoughts and fancies conceived by the mind, while a portion of its faculties are quiescent in sleep. In other words, dreaming is nothing more than the action of only a part of the mind. When

sleep is perfect, when no part of the mind, or of its organ, the brain, is in action, there is no thought at all, and, consequently, no dreaming. So, when we are fully awake, when our thoughts proceed from the whole mind, and not from a part of it only, the process of thinking is no longer called dreaming. We are then dealing with the real, and not, as in dreaming, with the imaginary. That this is the correct view of dreaming, few intelligent persons will now dispute. And can a man know more, or reason better, with a part only of his mind, than he can with it all? If not, were Joseph's dreaming thoughts of any more value than were his waking thoughts? Which were more in accordance with reason, science, and common sense, man's only reliable guides, his waking thoughts, which pointed to a man as the father of Mary's unborn babe, or his dreaming thoughts, which, as the father of that babe, pointed to a ghost of whom no one had ever before heard? Which are more likely to beget babies, men or ghosts? By which, then, a man, or a ghost, is it more probable that Jesus was begotten? And why was it that "the angel of the Lord" could never make his appearance to Joseph when this dreamy old gentleman was awake? Why did that angel, on all occasions, come sneaking up to Joseph when this latter person was asleep, and when, consequently, he could neither see clearly, nor reason correctly?

Your priests and your Sunday-school teachers have doubtless inculcated into your minds the idea that Joseph actually saw an "angel of the Lord," and that he actually heard that angel speak certain words concerning Mary and her unborn babe. The Bible, however, as you can easily learn by reading it for yourselves, gives no such account of the affair. It simply represents Joseph as dreaming that he saw an angel, and that he heard the angel speak those words. *Realities*, you well know, are not *dreams*. Had the apparent visit of the angel to Joseph, therefore, been a *reality*, there would evidently have been no more *dream* about it than there is about my presence

before you at this moment. The fact, then, that Joseph's angel was a *dream* angel is proof positive that the whole thing was nothing more than a simple, and, under the circumstances, a very natural creation, of Joseph's own partially dormant brain. Of what value, then, was that dream? On a certain occasion, there appeared to myself, in a dream, flying through the air, about a thousand feet from the earth, a whole battalion of artillerymen, with their cannons, their artillery wagons, their horses, etc. Mine was a real, and not an invented dream; and that is more than can be safely said of Joseph's dream. But are even the most credulous among you prepared to believe that what I seemed, in my dream, to see were real artillerymen, real wagons, etc.? Which testimony is worth the most, that of the man who testifies that he was fully awake when he saw and heard the things concerning which he testifies, or that of the man who testifies that he was sound asleep when he saw and heard them, or, rather, when he seemed to see and to hear them?

Let us suppose that, with your present degree or amount of intelligence, you had lived at the time of which we are speaking. Let us suppose, too, that the young woman in question had been the daughter of your next neighbor, Mr. Smith or Mr. Brown, and that she had caused a great deal of scandal in the neighborhood by becoming a prospective mother without ever having been a wife. Let us suppose, further, that Mr. Joseph Green, another neighbor of yours, an old widower, a man rather stupid, and grossly superstitious; a believer in dreams, in ghosts, in the sexual cohabitation of Gods and ghosts with human females, and other things equally absurd, had been desperately in love with the young woman in question, and, in spite of her misfortune, had wished to marry her. Let us suppose, finally, that, just at the right time to rescue her almost hopelessly lost reputation, this old dreamer had dreamed that an "angel of the Lord," whatever that may have been, had informed him that

her unborn babe was the offspring of a certain ghost of whom no one had ever before heard, would you, on the strength of that dream, have bowed down to that little, helpless, bastard babe, after its birth, and worshiped it as a God? Or, let us suppose that the child in question had not been born until the present time, and that he was born of some unmarried woman of your own neighborhood, would you worship him as a God? You know very well that you would not. And can this ghost-baby-dream story have become any more worthy of belief, by reaching us, as it does, through mere hearsay handed down through a thousand corrupt channels, than it would have been had it been received directly from the lips of the dreamer himself?

Luke tells a very different story about this ghost-baby affair. He says that the angel Gabriel interviewed Mary herself, and made known to her all that was about to happen to her. This story entirely relieves Joseph of the necessity of dreaming, and, in my opinion, is a better story than is that told by Matthew. As a historical production, however, Luke's story is of no more value than is that of Matthew. Since no one except Mary herself saw the angel, on the occasion in question, or heard him speak, her own utterly unsupported word was evidently the only testimony in regard to the matter that the author of Luke could have had upon which to base his story. But, under the circumstances, of how much value was her unsupported word in regard to a matter so utterly incredible in its nature? What do we know of her character for veracity? Were the Jews of her time, as a rule, noted for their love of truth? Was she not the most deeply interested of all the parties involved in the matter? Was not her story, too, quite a common one among unmarried women who found themselves in a condition similar to hers? If her name had been Mary Smith, and she had been the daughter of your next neighbor, of how much value, in your estimation, would have been her unsupported word in regard

to her own unpleasant condition? Under similar circumstances, how much credence would you now give to the similarly unsupported word of an equally truthful young woman of your own neighborhood? You know very well that you would regard such a story as unworthy of anything but ridicule. And yet, in either of these supposed cases, the testimony, coming directly from the pretended virgin herself, would be a thousand times better than it now is, reaching us, as it does, through a countless number of doubtful hearsays. Such women are never regarded as virgins, and such babies are never worshiped as Gods by those who are most intimately acquainted with them and their affairs. In order to believe such stories, it is necessary that we be totally ignorant of the real facts, and that we be, moreover, so blinded by priestcraft as to be unable to reason upon such subjects.

Upon these two absurd and contradictory stories, written by no one knows whom, and upon them alone, rests the doctrine of the divine paternity of Jesus, and upon this doctrine, and upon it alone, rests the entire Christian Religion. And must we, indeed, be eternally tormented in fire and brimstone, if we find ourselves utterly unable, on such testimony, to believe either of these two supremely ridiculous stories? If we must, then who, except the most arrant fools who can believe anything that their priests tell them to believe, can hope to escape eternal and unutterable torments?

How came *God* to possess *sex*? Of necessity, its possession by him, and its special relation or adaptation to the accomplishment of a particular object—the begetting of Jesus—must have been the results either of *pure accident* or of *deliberate design*. If they were results of *pure accident*, then, of necessity, *chance* must have existed before *God*, and both God and Jesus must have been not only *finite*, but, also, *purely accidental beings*. This hypothesis, as you doubtless perceive, would utterly un-God them both. If, on the other hand, they were the

results of *deliberate design*, then, of equal necessity, there must have been a *deliberate designer*—an *older God*, who, with a particular object in view, the begetting of Jesus—bestowed the *male sex* upon *your God* as the *means* necessary to the accomplishment of that object. It is a well-known fact that the *means* are always *designed* and *provided* after the *nature* of the *object* to be *accomplished* by them has been *conceived*, and with *direct reference* to the *accomplishment* of that *object*. If, then, as the Bible and all of its champions teach, the coming of Jesus in the human form upon earth was an *object* which had long been *designed*, then you are absolutely compelled to admit that the *designer* of that *object*—whoever he may have been—must also, of necessity, have *designed* and *provided*, with *direct reference* to that *object*, the *sex* of your *God*, which was the only *means* by which that object could possibly be accomplished. You are certainly compelled to either admit this fact or to claim that, originally, God's sex existed by pure accident, and without any use or design whatever; and that it was a purely accidental afterthought that led him to utilize this purely accidental and utterly objectless possession in the begetting of Jesus. Which one of these two utterly ruinous conclusions will you accept?

And now, before closing this already long lecture, I wish to consider the nature and the effect of the vicarious atonement said to have been made for us by Jesus. As you doubtless all know, this so-called atonement is said to have been made by the death and other sufferings which are said to have been inflicted upon him in our stead.

In the first place, then, I will say that, since it entirely releases the guilty from the punishments due to their crimes—since it entirely removes from them all the unpleasant effects of their own transgressions—since it enables them to sin with perfect impunity, this method of atonement is both unjust and unwise. Leaving, as it does, the wicked without any check to their wickedness, it necessarily leaves the good without any protection from that

wickedness. Far worse than this, however, is that other phase of this form of atonement, the punishing of the innocent in the place of the guilty. In doing this, it simply places a premium upon vice, a penalty upon virtue. What could be more outrageous in its nature, or more pernicious in its effects? What would you think of an earthly absolute monarch who, having found a band of robbers guilty of various capital offenses, should condemn his own innocent son to suffer death in their stead and at their hands, and who should then, in consideration of this atrocious murder, take these bloody monsters into special favor, and make them full heirs of all his possessions. Could anything but the foulest of all fiends act in this manner? And does not the horribly blasphemous doctrine in question make just such a foul fiend of God? Why could he not just as easily have pardoned men, and saved them from hell, without this murder as he could with it? Can the champions of the Bible explain how the committing of this one more murder could render men so much fitter for pardon and for heaven than they were before? If they were fit for heaven at all, why did he require them to commit this murder before he would admit them to that blissful abode? If they were not fit for heaven at all, and were fit for hell, as they doubtless were, why did he not let them go to hell? Why did he wish to fill heaven with inhabitants fit only for hell?

And what if men had refused or neglected to commit this murder? What if they had permitted Jesus to reach old age, and to die a natural death? Would not such refusal, or such neglect, such humanity on their part, have resulted in the effectual thwarting of God's entire plan of salvation, and in their own universal damnation? Since, according to all orthodox teachings upon the subject, God foreordained, and rendered unavoidable, the death of Jesus upon the cross, must he not, of necessity, have also foreordained, and rendered equally unavoidable, all the instrumentalities by which that death was to be brought

about? Did not God himself, then, virtually commit this atrocious murder? Were the men involved in it anything more than the mere instruments with which he performed the murderous act? And could a particle of either merit or demerit attach to these instruments on account of the use to which he put them?

Since, according to all the orthodox teachings upon the subject, Gods never die, that part of Jesus which suffered death, must, of necessity, have been his human part. In demanding and accepting the sacrifice of this part of Jesus, therefore, your God undeniably required and accepted a human sacrifice. How much better, then, is he than are any other Gods who demand and accept human sacrifices? If, before you were old enough to reason upon the subject, you had not been totally blinded by priestcraft, you could not fail to perceive that this is simply one of the most horrible doctrines of what you stigmatize as paganism.

Besides its horrible injustice and inhumanity, this vicarious atonement always has proved, and, from its very nature, always must prove, an utter failure. If, in our stead, Jesus suffered punishment, then, of necessity, he must have suffered that very form and amount of punishment to which we had been condemned, and which we would certainly have had to suffer, if he had not thus suffered it in our stead. Had he suffered any other form of punishment, he would not have suffered in our stead at all; we not having ever been condemned to that form of punishment. If I be condemned to die, you cannot take my punishment upon yourself, and suffer in my stead, in any other way than by putting yourself fully in my place, and thereby suffering death, in the very manner in which I was condemned to suffer it, and at the very time at which I otherwise would have suffered it. These facts are too clear to require proof.

To what form of punishment, then, had we been condemned? To physical death only, and to the necessity of

laboring, during life, for our bread. When, at the time of the so-called fall of man, God passed sentence upon the human race, he did not even so much as hint at such a punishment as eternal damnation. Indeed, this latter form of punishment, now so extremely popular, does not seem to have been invented until several thousand years afterwards. We not having been condemned to any punishment except that of physical death and of hard labor, there was evidently no other form of punishment from which we could possibly have been redeemed—no other form that Jesus could possibly have suffered in our stead.

What punishment, then, did Jesus suffer? Physical death only? And did he suffer this in our stead? Did he redeem us from this form of punishment? If he did, must not this have been the very form of punishment to which we had been condemned? And, having been thus redeemed, must we not now be entirely exempt from all the evils of this form of punishment? Why is it, then, that we continue to suffer physical death just the same as we suffered it before we received the benefit of this so-called redemption? In what respect has this pretended redemption improved our physical condition? From what physical ills are we now exempt which we would have had to suffer had we not been thus redeemed?

If, however, as most of the champions of the Bible now teach, the punishment to which we were condemned, had been eternal damnation, then, in order to suffer that punishment in our stead, and to thereby release us entirely from the painful necessity of suffering it ourselves, Jesus must, of necessity, have been eternally damned. But was he thus eternally damned? If not—if he did not suffer this punishment at all, or any other punishment equivalent thereto—it clearly follows that he never suffered any such punishment in our stead, and that his vicarious atonement never redeemed or released us from any such punishment. Undeniably, then, we are still as fully under the doom of eternal damnation as we ever were. To speak of Jesus as

having been eternally damned, seems to you like blasphemy. And yet, why should he not have been eternally damned? Because he did not deserve to suffer such punishment? But did he deserve to suffer any punishments at all? Did he deserve to suffer death and the other punishments which he did suffer? Are we talking about what he deserved? Are we not rather talking about what men deserved? And did men deserve eternal damnation? If they did, and if they were condemned to suffer it, then would it not have been just as right and proper for him to be eternally damned in their stead, as it was for him to suffer death or any other punishment in their stead? Would not the principle involved have been exactly the same? And would not the magnanimity and love exhibited by him, and the benefit conferred upon us, have been infinitely greater, had he volunteered to bear the unutterable torments of eternal damnation in our stead, than they were, if, as you teach, he merely suffered, in our stead, a few moments of physical pain?

Be all these things as they may, however, his death, so far as its conferring any benefit upon us was concerned, was indisputably a total failure. We suffer physical death now, just the same that we did before his death; and we are just as promptly and just as thoroughly damned now as we ever were. What was it, then, from which he redeemed us? Can you point out a single form of suffering to which we are not just as liable now as we would have been had he never lived or died at all? If you cannot do this, can you point out a single benefit that we have derived from his death?

The champions of the Bible boldly enough assert that, by his untimely taking off, Jesus put it into our own power to escape eternal damnation; that we have only to believe—and this we can rarely do—that he was the son of a God, and to claim the merits of his death, and presto! the devil is cheated out of his just dues, and we, born in sin, and heirs of hell, are in process of becoming little angels with

wings. I defy these champions, however, to adduce a particle of proof to sustain this assertion, or to show that any less a percentage of the human race are now damned than would have been damned had there never been any such person as Jesus. How of those whom God, before the foundation of the world, predestinated to eternal damnation, and whom, consequently, he rendered utterly incapable of attaining any other destiny? Did the death of Jesus put it into the power of these men to escape eternal damnation, and to thereby thwart God's predestination and reverse the condition or destiny that God foresaw, or, rather, that he thought he foresaw, was to be finally theirs? And as to those whom he predestinated to eternal salvation, and whom, consequently, he rendered utterly incapable of attaining any other destiny, did they need the death of Jesus to enable them to escape a hell which God had made it utterly impossible for them ever to enter? Besides this, the conditions upon which we are to obtain a share in the merits of the blood of Jesus are usually entirely impracticable to intelligent persons—to the only persons who are really worth saving. For want of faith, which, try as I may, I have no power to possess, or to exercise, I myself, for one, must, according to all the orthodox teachings on the subject, be eternally damned. What good, then, has Jesus ever done me; and under what obligations am I to love God and to praise him, for his miserable murderous plan of salvation, which leaves me, without any fault of my own, to writhe, and to scream—if I would scream—for ages without end, in the unutterable torments of fire and brimstone? Let those love him and praise him to whom he has done some good. To me, he has done an infinite wrong. Without consulting either my wishes or my welfare, he has made me with such an organization, and surrounded me with such influences, as render me utterly unable to believe certain absurd dogmas, and now, because of this inability, which he himself has fixed upon me, he dooms me to eternal damnation. If I owe

him anything, then, for thus making me on purpose to damn me, is it love and praises, or is it hatred, abhorrence, and curses? If he were not more cruel than the foulest fiend of perdition, would he not, at least, return me to that condition of personal non-existence or annihilation, from which, without my consent, he called me, instead of thus compelling me to live forever, against my own wishes, in the fearful flames of an awful hell?

I do not believe that Jesus died for us at all. We were never condemned to die in the manner in which he died; and, as to death in general, we all still have it to die, just the same as before. Jesus was condemned to die on his own account, and for his own offenses, and not on our account, or for our offenses. He died, too, not because we needed his death, but simply because he could not help himself, or because he had made up his mind to die thus, in order that, by becoming a martyr to his own teachings, he might strengthen those teachings, and render his own name immortal. Since his body was a mortal human body, he must finally have died anyway, just as other men die; and since he died only once, that once must, of necessity, have been for himself.

Suppose, however, that he did die to save the whole human race, or even a respectable minority of them, from everlasting torments, what did he do more than any one of us would do under similar circumstances? Is not history crowded with instances in which men have volunteered to suffer death simply to save from temporal destruction the inhabitants of a single city, or even the crew of a small whale boat? Where is the father or the mother, even among savages, who, with an absolute certainty, as had Jesus, of entering immediately after death into the unspeakable joys of heaven, would not thus, a little earlier, abandon the sorrows of earth, to save even one beloved child from eternal burnings in fire and brimstone? I do not believe that I overestimate the innate nobility and moral heroism of humanity, when I assert that almost any

parent would die to save his or her child even to the present life. Do not we, then, deserve as much praise for what we would do if we had a chance, as does Jesus for what he did do when he did have a chance? And since, according to all the orthodox teachings upon the subject, Jesus was God himself, what was he doing in all these things, except acting out his *own pleasure*?

Besides all of these objections, a belief in this so-called vicarious atonement has a very pernicious influence upon the moral characters of those who entertain that belief. To these persons, this plan of salvation stands as an ever open doorway of escape from all the legitimate consequences of wickedness. Jesus having already, as they believe, paid their sin bills in advance, they believe that they have nothing to do, in regard to those bills, but to claim the benefit of his act. In other words, they believe that all they have to do, in order to evade the payment of their sin bills, is to take advantage of this universal moral bankrupt law, and go clear. From childhood up, they are taught that a resort to this truly ignominious subterfuge is a highly meritorious act. Indeed, in their insolent bigotry, those who have gone through this ignominious form of moral bankruptcy are wont to claim that themselves are the only persons fit for heaven, and the only persons likely ever to enter therein. All other persons, they denounce as fit only for hell, and as certain to be at last cast therein.

Believing, and correctly too, that, by means of this plan of salvation, they can just as easily evade the payment of a large sin bill as they can that of a small one, most persons who contemplate finally going into this ignominious form of moral bankruptcy are wont to run up as large sin bills as possible. Visit our prisons, and you will find that, with scarcely an exception, their inmates are all firm believers in this form of moral bankruptcy, and that they all intend, finally, to avail themselves of its provisions, and to thereby enable themselves to sneak, un-

challenged, right into the joys unspeakable of heaven. So of those who die upon the gallows. As might be expected, these persons are, almost invariably, firm believers in vicarious atonement. They almost invariably declare, too, often with their last breath, that, by means of this atonement, their murder-blackened souls are going to swing right from the gallows into the unspeakable joys of heaven. And why should they not swing thus into heaven? Was not the first entry ever made into heaven, upon this highly demoralizing plan of salvation, made in this very manner by an executed criminal? Jesus does, indeed, seem to have been, as you teach that he was, the friend of sinners. But who ever heard of his being a friend to any except sinners?

All who profess to be journeying to the New Jerusalem upon means obtained without an equivalent, by going through this ignominious form of moral bankruptcy, clearly admit that they possess no means of their own—no means honorably obtained—no personal merit that would enable them to enter the pearly gates of that beautiful but visionary city. They clearly admit—often in direct words spoken to God in prayer—that, in strict justice, they ought to be “venting their fruitless cries beyond the reach of hope or mercy,” and that, without any personal fitness for the place, they are going to heaven entirely on the merits of another person who was cruelly and unjustly put to death for their offenses. Admitting that these persons tell the truth about themselves—and of this I have not the slightest doubt—I am free to say that I would rather go to hell, like a man, and in the company of men, than to go to heaven, like a sneak, and in the company of such a crowd of sneaks. Let me go where I may I will go as a man on my own merits.

LECTURE TWENTIETH.

THE MESSIAH OR SAVIOR.—(CONCLUDED).

HAVING, in my last lecture, fully considered the origin of the Christ idea, the conception and birth of Jesus, the nature of his vicarious atonement, etc. I propose, in my present lecture, to conclude the subject of the Messiah or Savior, and close this whole course of lectures, by noticing the personal history of Jesus, and the so-called prophecies which are supposed to point to him as the Messiah or Savior of the world. In doing this, I shall take the Bible as I find it, having already, in preceding lectures, sufficiently considered the subject of its authenticity.

Of the four evangelical writers of the New Testament, two, Mark and John, say not a word about the birth and the early life of Jesus. In their respective writings, they start out abruptly with an account of the baptism of Jesus, which took place when he was about thirty years of age. The other two, Matthew and Luke, differ so widely in their accounts, that, if it were not for the name of Jesus, we would hardly suspect that they were writing concerning the same individual.

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example [by putting her to death publicly, according to law], was minded to put her away [or out of the way] privily. But while he

thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream [that is, he dreamed that an angel of the Lord appeared unto him], saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. i, 18-20).

On these three verses, may be said to rest the entire structure of the Christian Religion. If they contain nothing but truth, if there really ever was any such being as the Holy Ghost, if he really was a God, and if he really did, without anything to do it with, beget Jesus, then, indeed, the Christian Religion is a true religion, whether it be the only true religion or not. If, on the other hand, there never was any such being as the Holy Ghost, if he was not a God, or if he did not beget Jesus; in short, if the contents of these three verses be false, then, of necessity, the Christian Religion must be, at best, a mere priestly imposition founded upon an absurd pagan fable. Let us, then, carefully analyze the language of these verses, and see to what that analysis will lead us.

From the fact that Mary's unpleasant condition was *found out or detected*, it is evident that she had been keeping it a *secret*. Had she herself made known her condition, it could not have been said of her that "she was *found* with child." And this effort at secrecy indicates, on her part, a consciousness of guilt, or, at least, a feeling of shame, or of fear. If her child had really been of the "Holy Ghost," would she have experienced any such feelings?

As to who it was that found out that she was with child, and as to how he found out this fact, the unknown author of Matthew has not seen fit to inform us. Under the circumstances of the case, the omission of this information is, to say the least of it, extremely unfortunate. In an ordinary case of pregnancy, in which the mere fact of a woman being with child is the only question involved, such an omission might be a matter of very little impor-

tance. When, however, on pain of the most relentless persecutions in this world, and of endless and unutterable torments in the world to come, we are required to implicitly believe that Mary "was found with child of the *Holy Ghost*," a child begetter never before heard of, it becomes a matter of the utmost importance that all the facts in the case be so clearly stated, and so fully established, as to render unbelief in this ghost-baby story utterly impossible. According to all the orthodox teachings upon the subject, we must believe the story or else be roasted, for billions of billions of ages, in the fearful flames of fire and brimstone, and then be no nearer the end of our torments than we were when they were first inflicted upon us. How important it is, then, that we should believe the story! But how can we believe it, if we have no power to do so? And whence comes the requisite power? From the evidence alone. Of ourselves, we have no more power to believe without evidence than we have to fly without wings. Belief, in anything, is simply an effect of which the evidence in the case is the cause. If the cause be sufficient, the effect is bound to follow. If, however, the cause be insufficient, then it is utterly impossible for the effect to follow. To be damned, therefore, for not believing, is simply to be damned for want of power—for want of power to experience within ourselves a certain effect, when no sufficient cause has been brought to bear upon us to produce that effect. Just as reasonably might God damn us for our want of power to fly without wings, as to damn us for our want of power to believe without evidence.

Our will has nothing to do, in any case, with either our belief or our unbelief. We may wish to believe, or we may wish to fly, but our will cannot give us the power to do either the one or the other; and, even if it could give us this power, are we any more responsible for the action of our will than we are for that of our stomach, our liver, or our kidneys? We believe certain things, whether they

be of a pleasant or an unpleasant nature, simply because we have no power to disbelieve them. We disbelieve certain other things, whether they be of a pleasant or an unpleasant nature, simply because we have no power to believe them. And we are no more responsible for the belief in the one case, and for the unbelief in the other, than the African is for being black, or the Caucasian for not being black. The whole thing depends entirely upon power, which we can neither create within ourselves, if we have it not, nor annihilate within ourselves, if we have it. As I have already shown, the power or the want of power to believe a certain thing depends entirely upon the evidence. If the evidence for a thing be conclusive, then, in spite of our will to the contrary, we are compelled to believe that thing. If, on the contrary, the evidence against that thing be conclusive, then, in spite of our will to the contrary, we are bound to disbelieve that thing. If our beliefs and our unbeliefs were dependent upon our will, then, by simply willing to do so, we could either believe or disbelieve anything whatever. Each of my opponents could just as easily believe himself to be a virgin, and to be "with child of the Holy Ghost," as to disbelieve it, or as to believe the same things of Mary or of anyone else. All things would become equally credible, and equally incredible. All would depend upon the will alone.

From the fact, then, that our beliefs and our unbeliefs are entirely involuntary on our own part, it is evident that there can be neither merit nor demerit in either belief or unbelief. It is just as right and proper, therefore, to reward, or to punish, the one, as it is to reward or punish the other. The doctrine that "he that believeth not shall be damned" is a monstrously absurd and unjust doctrine.

Of necessity, all evidence reaches us, and all belief is produced in us, through the medium of the five senses, seeing, hearing, feeling, etc. The best of all evidence, therefore, is that which reaches us through the medium of our own senses. Indeed, we rarely have the power to dis-

believe that which we clearly see, hear, feel, etc., for ourselves. That evidence which we receive from another, we believe, or disbelieve, in proportion to the credibility, or the incredibility, of that which is testified, and our confidence, or our want of it, in the veracity of the witness. To be totally ignorant of the character for veracity of the witness, is simply to be totally ignorant of the truth or the falsity of that concerning which he testifies. This is especially true, when, as in the case before us, the thing testified of is of a very improbable nature.

What could be more improbable than that an utterly boundless, shapeless, bodiless, and, consequently, motionless ghost should get a woman with child? The champions of the Bible themselves universally admit that such an event is, in the highest degree, improbable. Indeed, so very improbable do they regard the occurrence of such an event, at any time or in any country, that no amount of historical evidence can make them believe that, with the exception of the single case in question, any such event ever occurred in any age or in any country. No amount of historical evidence can make them believe that Chrishna, Buddha, Prometheus, and the dozen or more other so-called begotten Sons of God or Incarnations of Deity were any of them anything more than human beings. These champions of the Bible also find themselves utterly unable to believe that an event so extremely improbable will ever occur again—that this ghost will ever beget God any more sons. How, then, can they be so certain as they profess to be that an event so infinitely improbable ever occurred at all?

Outside of this highly incredible story, and of others, equally incredible, founded upon it, or at least drawn from the same source, what do we know of this child-begetting Holy Ghost? Do we really know anything more of him than we know of the Unholy Ghost, the Great Giascutis, or the Great Jumping Jingo? As every one knows, who has ever informed himself in regard to the matter, the

word ghost originally meant simply breath. The Holy Ghost, then, was nothing more nor less than holy breath, such breath as is breathed forth by holy persons. "And when he had said this, he *breathed* on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the *Holy Ghost*" (John xx, 22). So even at the present time, when a priest is ordained, this holy breath or Holy Ghost is breathed into him by the priests who ordain him. And can such breath beget children? If it can, what can it beget them with? And what might be the effect of a priest's holy breath or holy ghost [formerly written thus without capitals] upon one of our own women? Might it not have the same effect upon her that it is said to have had upon Mary? Indeed, is it not extremely probable that many women, who would otherwise have been first-class virgins, have become prospective mothers while inhaling the truly dangerous breath of their priests? "A word to the wise," etc.

Be all this as it may, however, we have here a ghost, never before seen or heard of, at least in his present capacity of child-begetter, abruptly introduced upon the stage, as a star actor in this grand farce, to play the role of father to a poor unmarried woman's baby—to subject her to almost certain disgrace and to probable death, and to thus set a very immoral example to other individuals of the male sex. Who, then, and what was this ghost? Whence did he come? What were his antecedents? In what form did he approach the young woman? Under what circumstances did he approach her? Was it during the day when she could see him, or during the night when she could not see him? Was she acquainted with him? If not, how could she know that he was the Holy Ghost? How could she know that he was a ghost of any kind? With what instrumentality did he perform the act of copulation—the act of begetting the child in question? Had he a body? If not—if there was nothing about him that she could see, feel, or hear—how could she know that he was of the male sex? How did he manage to transfer to

her womb the life-germ from which her child sprang? If she could neither see him nor feel him, how could she know that he was getting her with child? How could she know anything at all about him? And if he had a body sufficiently substantial to be seen and felt—sufficiently substantial to hold such sexual intercourse with her as was absolutely necessary in order to get her with child—how could she be certain that he was not a man playing the role of the child-begetting ghost in question? Were not such vile tricks frequently played upon extremely pious and credulous women?

Admitting, however, that this young woman was actually gotten with child by a ghost, how much better or more natural was her act than that of the woman who is gotten with child by a man? How would the champions of the Bible like it if this same old bachelor ghost, or some other ghost of the same kind, should get their young daughters with child in this same manner? And is he not just as likely to get young women with child now as he ever was? Has he ever lost his virile powers, or promised never again to beget a child in so immoral a manner? If not, what protection have our young females against his insidious modes of seduction? So long as this scene is laid in a distant land and a remote age, we may be delighted with it. Let it be brought home to ourselves, however, and then we would a little rather the libidinous old ghost in question would beget his young ghosts upon the daughters of our neighbors, and not upon our own. Could not such a ghost stir up a "*hell-of-a-time*" in almost any of our families? How many of our good orthodox sisters would be willing to be thus embraced and made pregnant by so unnatural a thing as a ghost? Would not every pure and natural woman prefer to have a live man, a good and loving husband, for the father of her children? Would she not rather her children should be young men and young women than that they should be young ghosts and young ghostesses? And would you think any more highly

of one of your unmarried neighbor ladies who, *a la mode Marie*, should bear a child to a ghost, whom she could not love and whose wife she could not hope ever to be, than you would of one who, *a la mode natura*, should bear a child to a young man whom she could and did love, and whose wife she could and did hope sometime to be?

The author of Matthew does not have Mary herself set up any claim to ghostly paternity for her unborn babe. He represents her as being entirely silent in regard to the whole matter. As we now have his account, he is made to say that "she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." The "Holy Ghost" part of this quotation, however, is pronounced by many Bible critics to be an interpolation or forgery, and to form no part of the story as originally written. In preceding lectures, I have sufficiently shown the correctness of the conclusion to which these critics have come. Indeed, a belief in its correctness is almost forced upon us by the language that immediately follows these words: "Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a *public example*, was minded to put her away *privily*." From this, it is clear that Joseph believed, or at least pretended to believe, Mary to be guilty of adultery, a crime for which he, as her injured husband, had a legal right "to make her a public example," by putting her to death in a public manner, and for which "to put her away [or to death] *privily*" or in a private manner, was deemed a less cruel form of punishment. He could not, however, have believed her to be thus guilty—thus worthy to be made "a public example," or even to be "put away *privily*," unless he had believed that she had held illicit intercourse with a man. Had she really been "found with child of the *Holy Ghost*," would he ever, for a moment, have associated the thought of guilt with her condition, or of inflicting upon her any form of punishment? And would he have needed to pretend to thus believe her guilty and to think of punishing her? Is it not evident, then, that she was merely "found with

child," and that Joseph very naturally supposed her to be with child of a man? Is it not evident that the "Holy Ghost" part of the finding in her case was an after-thought—an addition to the story made at a later time? At any rate, if the Holy Ghost figured at all in the report of the case, as he first heard it, Joseph evidently regarded that part of the report which related to his ghostship as utterly unworthy of belief. It did not create in his mind even a doubt in regard to Mary's guilt, if he really believed her guilty at all. He still fully believed, or at least pretended to believe, her to be worthy to suffer death as "a public example." He never, for a moment, thought—at least he never for a moment talked—of such a thing as letting her go unpunished. He conveyed the idea that he would certainly "put her away," or, as we would now express it, out of the way, by putting her to death according to the law. He intimated, however, that in the kindness of his heart, he felt disposed to lighten, as far as possible, the horrors of this terrible punishment by having it inflicted upon her in a private manner, thus sparing her the additional horrors of a public execution.

"But while he thought on these things," or pretended to think upon them, while he was still revolving or pretending to revolve in his own mind whether, as an example or warning to other women, he should punish her in a public manner, or should listen to the pleadings of his own compassionate heart, and, in a private manner, inflict upon her the punishment prescribed by the laws of his country, he had a dream, or pretended to have one, in which he seemed to see an angel, and to hear him say that Mary was with child of the Holy Ghost. Being an extremely superstitious man—a believer in dreams, in ghosts, in pregnancy produced by ghosts, etc.—he at once accepted, or pretended to accept, his own dream—the creation of his own wide-awake or partially dormant brain—as real information, coming from God, for the vindication of Mary's character. Upon the reception of this supposed

information, therefore, he at once dismissed all thought, real or pretended, of guilt on Mary's part, and resolved that, instead of punishing her, as he had intended, or as he pretended to intend, he would marry her.

If, then, the *Holy Ghost* part of the finding in Mary's case was made and reported by the same party that found her with child, why did Joseph need to be thus informed in a dream that she was with child of the Holy Ghost? If, previous to his dream, he, and the neighbors generally, possessed the very same information on the subject that he seemed to receive in the dream; if the dream made no addition whatever to his information, or theirs—and it certainly did not if she had already been “found with child of the *Holy Ghost*”—why did the dream make so complete a change in his opinions, or his pretended opinions, concerning Mary's guilt, and in his proposed course of conduct toward her? If, previous to his dream, he, and the neighbors also, had known that she was “with child of the *Holy Ghost*,” and if the Holy Ghost part of the findings in her case had already been made and reported, he, at least, must have known this—would he have thought of such a thing as making “her a public example,” or even of such a thing as putting “her away privily?” If he would, why did his dream, which brought him not a particle of new information on the subject, so entirely change his intention? Why did he not still think to either “make her a public example,” or “to put her away privily?” The only possible object of making “her a public example” would have been to deter other women from committing the same offense which she was believed to have committed, and for which she was being punished? But did Joseph regard the act or condition of becoming with child of the *Holy Ghost*, as an offense demanding the same punishment as that of adultery? Did he not, on the contrary, regard that act or condition as a mark of divine favor? And, while regarding it thus, would he have either desired or expected, by making Mary “a public ex-

ample," or even by putting "her away privily," to have deterred other women from becoming, in like manner, "with child of the *Holy Ghost*?"

Since, then previous to his dream, Joseph certainly did believe, or did pretend to believe, that Mary was a guilty woman—an adulteress, worthy to be put to death, or otherwise punished, and totally unfit to be his wife—is it not evident that she had simply been "found with child," the same as any other pregnant woman, and that the limiting phrase "of the Holy Ghost" is an interpolation or forgery, added, at a later date, for the purpose of making the report of the findings in Mary's case, harmonize with the report of Joseph's dream? At any rate, is it not evident that, previous to his own dream, Joseph gave not the slightest credence to the Holy Ghost part of the findings in Mary's case, if that part had ever been made and reported? Must not that part of the report, then, have been founded upon evidence of a far less satisfactory nature than is that of a mere dream? If the dream was real, it was necessary to change his own belief. If it was pretended, it was necessary to change the belief of the neighbors. In neither case was the report sufficient to create belief. It had to be backed up by a dream.

As we now have it, however, the Bible declares that Mary "was found with child of the *Holy Ghost*." The question, then, naturally arises, who found her in that condition, and how did he *know* that her unborn babe was "of the *Holy Ghost*?" Were there any peculiar symptoms by which he could unerringly distinguish a case of Holy Ghost pregnancy from a case of ordinary or man pregnancy? If not, how could he possibly know that this was a genuine case of Holy Ghost pregnancy? And if there were any such peculiar symptoms, must they not, of necessity, have been learned from *previous cases* of Holy Ghost pregnancy? Will my opponents, therefore, be so kind as to mention some of those *previous cases*? Will they also be so kind as to give the name of the expert

who detected Mary's delicate condition, and who so promptly pronounced hers a case of Holy Ghost pregnancy? Do they know anything at all in regard to his character either for veracity or for skill as a Holy Ghost detective? May he not have been himself the father of Mary's unborn child? Who else would have been so likely as her seducer to be the first to know that she "was with child?" To whom else would she have been so likely to appeal for aid in time of her great misfortune? And who else would have been so likely to find her with child "of the *Holy Ghost*?" Under all of these circumstances, could his utterly unsupported testimony have been of any value whatever? We have seen that, extremely credulous as he was in regard to such a form of pregnancy, Joseph, whose opportunities for knowing the facts and the probabilities in the case, the character of the expert, etc., were undeniably far better than are our own, did not believe a word of this pretended expert's report concerning the Holy Ghost part of the findings on this celebrated case. This leaves us with nothing at all except Joseph's dream upon which to base the ghostly paternity of Mary's baby. In my last lecture, however, I proved that this dream was totally worthless, that even if it was real it was of no more value as evidence than would be a similar dream if now achieved by one of ourselves in regard to some unfortunate young woman of our own neighborhood.

So far from having Mary thus "found with child"—so far from having Joseph thus believe her to be guilty, or at least, to pretend to so believe until he could achieve a dream for the benefit of the neighbors—so far from having him thus think or pretend to think of punishing her—so far from having him thus learn or pretend to learn in a dream that the Holy Ghost was responsible for Mary's condition, Luke has the whole matter, from the very beginning, satisfactorily understood between herself and her friends. Further on we will notice Luke's account. Joseph probably knew all the time that he was himself the ghost

that had got Mary into trouble, but he preferred throwing the blame upon the Holy Ghost. This would be more satisfactory to the neighbors. Hence, no doubt, his dream.

In Matt. ii, 1-3, we read: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."

As the beginning of a very sensational romance, this might do very well. When, however, it is claimed to be authentic history, it is certainly open to very grave criticisms. Who were those so-called wise men that came from the east, how many were there of them, and on whose authority were they called wise men? In what did their supposed wisdom consist? From how far east of Jerusalem did they come? Were they Jews or foreigners? If Jews, why does the author so pompously declare that they came from the east? Did the fact that they came from the east render them any better, any wiser, or any more honorable? Judea extended only a few miles east of Jerusalem—too few for the inhabitants on its eastern border to differ, in any material respect, from the rest of its inhabitants. What advantage, then, was there in their coming from the east? If they came from beyond the eastern border of Judea, they must have come from some of the wild idolatrous tribes of Arabia. But were any of these tribes ever noted for wise men? Since they left home after the birth of Jesus, and reached Bethlehem while he was still in the manger, in which he lay only a few days, they could not have come from beyond Arabia. They must, therefore, have been either Jews or Arabs.

If they were Jews, was it any mark of wisdom in them to go thus strolling about the streets of Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews," and declaring that they had "come to worship him?" Could "wise

men," from less than a day's journey east of Jerusalem, have supposed that the people of that city already knew of the obscure birth in a manger at Bethlehem of Mary's illegitimate child, and that they had already acknowledged him as the "born King of the Jews?" Would "wise men," if Jews, have dared to come thus boldly to Jerusalem and proclaim to Herod his successor to his throne—a successor, too, of ignoble birth? Would "wise men," if Jews, have dared thus openly to declare that they had "come to worship" this new-born pretender to the Jewish throne? Would not such conduct have constituted high treason and have been punished as such? Besides all this, were the Jews ever in the habit of worshiping their kings? If, when no one knew of the birth of any new king—if, simply because some unmarried woman of the lower class had borne a child in some old garret, cellar, or manger, a child which, as yet, did not seem to differ in any respect from any other male child—a band of vagrants should go thus strolling about the streets of London, saying, "Where is he that is born king of England?" and declaring that they had come from the east some fifteen miles "to worship him," would they be regarded as "wise men?" Would they not rather be regarded as fit subjects for a lunatic asylum?

If those so-called "wise men" were not Jews, of what nationality were they? As I have already shown, they must have belonged to some neighboring tribe of Arabians. But which one of these tribes ever produced men noted for wisdom? And would "wise men" from any of those tribes have dared to come thus openly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to the king, to the Roman governor, and to the whole people, a successor to the Jewish throne? What means had they with which to sustain such a proclamation, or to save themselves from condign punishment for having been unwise enough to make it? Besides this, would "wise men" from any of those idolatrous tribes have wished to "worship" a king of the Jews? Were

they ever in the habit of indulging in any such form of "worship?" Did they not always hate the Jews, kings and all, and did they not always have an abundance of objects of worship in their own country?

Besides all of these things, that star also requires a passing notice. Since it appeared "in the east," and since those so-called "wise men" were journeying toward the west, how did it manage to go before them, to Jerusalem and Bethlehem, as, in the ninth verse, we are assured that it did. In order to thus go before them, would it not have had to appear in the west? And how did those so-called "wise men" know that this particular star indicated the birth of a new king of the Jews? Was this particular star, or one exactly like it, in the habit of appearing thus, at the birth of each new king of the Jews, and at no other time? If it was not, then how could these persons, "wise men" though they may have been, have possibly known that this star indicated any such thing as they pretended that it did? If it was in the habit of thus appearing on each of these occasions, why was it never noticed on any other occasion, and why did none but the so-called "wise men" in question notice its appearance, or understand its import, on the present occasion? And since these men had this wonderful star to guide them unerringly to the spot "where the young child was," why did they need to stop at Jerusalem and go strolling about the streets, saying, "Where [the d——l] is he?" etc. Had the star temporarily deserted them while in the city?

Besides all this, since there are only two classes of stars, fixed stars and planets, that star must, of necessity, have been either a fixed star or a planet. From the fact, however, that it moved before these so-called "wise men," it evidently could not have been a fixed star. Of necessity, then, it must have been a planet. But what planet was it? What was its name? In what kind of an orbit did it revolve? At what distance was it from the sun? What was its rate of motion? Had it any moons, and if so, how

many? What force caused it to move toward the spot "where the young child was," and what force caused it to stand still directly over that particular spot? Was that spot in the line of its orbit? When was it created, and for what purpose? Of what was it composed? And what finally became of it? Who can answer these fair questions?

If all of these things were true, is it not rather strange that Luke does not say a word about them? As I have already said, he does not leave Mary, like a guilty woman, to be "found with child," nor does he leave her innocence to be established by the extremely uncertain chance of Joseph's dreaming that her child was "of the Holy Ghost." He has the angel Gabriel say to her in advance: "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be *called* the Son of the Highest [You will notice that while he is to actually "be great," he is only to "be *called* the Son of the Highest"]: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. [This promise was never fulfilled.] . . . The Holy Ghost [which usually dwelt in some man and used his organs] shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee [What does this mean?]: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be *called* [only *called*, you see] the Son of God" (Luke i, 31-35). And Luke has Mary communicate all of this very valuable information, in a very satisfactory manner, to her relatives and friends. He does not have her in any danger of being made "a public example." When Jesus is born, Luke, in place of Matthew's "wise men from the east," merely has a lot of ignorant shepherds from the immediate neighborhood visit him. The star he wisely omits entirely. And yet, if so wonderful a star had actually appeared, is it credible that he would thus have left it entirely unnoticed?

“And being warned of God in a dream [that is, having dreamed that they were “warned of God”] that they should not return to Herod [as he had ordered them to return, and as they had doubtless promised that they would return], they departed into their own country another way” (Matt. ii, 12). The parties referred to here were the same so-called “wise men” of whom I have just been speaking. From the fact that “they departed into their own country,” it becomes evident that they did not belong to the country of the Jews in which they then were. Of this matter, however, I have already said enough. I notice this passage only because of the dream that is mentioned in it. Did all of those men, at the same time, dream that dream; or did only one of them dream it for the whole company? If all of them, at the same time, dreamed it, would not so remarkable a coincidence have certainly been noticed by our author? And if only one of them dreamed it, how could the others know that it was from God? How many of you would believe one of your own neighbors, if he should claim to have a dream, very common-place in itself, from God? Indeed, how could the dreamer himself know that his dream was from God? Had dreams that came from God any peculiar characteristics by which they could be distinguished from other dreams? And was this dreamer certainly acquainted with those peculiar characteristics?

From the thirteenth to the fifteenth verses of the same chapter, we learn that, being warned of God in a dream, Joseph, with Mary and her child, fled into Egypt, where he remained until after the death of Herod. This flight, taking place as it did immediately after the departure of the so-called “wise men,” must, of necessity, have taken place from Bethlehem, where Jesus was when those men left him. This, you plainly see, renders it utterly impossible for Joseph and his family to have visited Jerusalem, after the birth of Jesus, until after their return from Egypt. Indeed, if they ever visited Jerusalem with

Jesus at all, their visit must have been made many months, if not many years, after their return from Egypt. This fact we learn from the twenty-second verse, in which we are informed that, on coming out of Egypt, Joseph was afraid to return into Judea; and that, having, as usual, dreamed that he was warned of God so to do, he turned aside into Galilee and abode at Nazareth.

The reason assigned by Matthew for this flight into Egypt is that Herod, jealous of the incipient fame of Mary's young baby, wished to have it put to death. So determined, indeed, is Herod said to have been to accomplish the destruction of the child Jesus, that, in order to be sure and not miss him, he "sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof from two years old and under." Some twenty thousand children are estimated to have been massacred on this occasion. Why Herod "slew all the children . . . from two years old and under," we are not informed. To me it seems that he might safely have spared the females. Was he afraid that Jesus might be a female, and that this female might become king of the Jews? And did not the so-called "wise men" show their wisdom with a vengeance when, by their silly inquiries for the new-born king of the Jews, they excited the king to commit this horrible massacre?

The reason assigned by Matthew for Joseph's being afraid to return into Judea is that he feared the life of Jesus might be endangered by Archelaus, who had become king of the Jews in place of Herod his father, who died while Joseph was in Egypt. This fear must have remained during the life-time of Archelaus, or, at least, until Joseph became satisfied that this king had no designs against the life of Jesus. In any view of the case, therefore Jesus must have been several years old when he first entered Jerusalem, if indeed he ever entered it at all before he began his ministry, which he did when about thirty years of age. And now let us see how this account har-

monizes with that given by the equally inspired author of Luke.

“And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days [forty in number] of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord” (Luke ii, 21, 22). Further on, we learn that, on this occasion, sacrifices for Mary’s purification were offered in the temple; that Jesus was publicly presented to the Lord; that the venerable Simeon and the prophetess Anna had a great rejoicing over him; and that, when all these things were accomplished, Joseph and his family departed, not by flight at night into Egypt, but openly and peaceably to their own home in Galilee. We also learn that, so far from being afraid to return into Judea, Joseph and his family were accustomed to go up to Jerusalem every year to the feast of the passover.

At the very same time, then, that Matthew has Joseph and his family fleeing into Egypt, to save Jesus from destruction at the hands of Herod, Luke has them remain quietly at Bethlehem for over a month, and then go publicly to Jerusalem, Herod’s own capital. At the very same time that Matthew has Jesus hid away in Egypt, Luke has him openly offered to the Lord in Jerusalem. At the very same time that Matthew has Herod butchering “all the children of Bethlehem and all the coasts thereof,” for the express purpose of insuring the destruction of Jesus, Luke has Jesus either remaining safely at Bethlehem, or journeying safely with his parents, in the most public manner, to Jerusalem. At the very same time that Matthew has Joseph afraid to return into Judea at all, Luke has him, with his family, go up to Jerusalem at least once every year.

Since it is utterly impossible for both of these accounts to be true, it devolves upon the champions of the Bible to show which one of them is true. If they should decide in

favor of Matthew, then it becomes their duty to clear up the story concerning the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem by Herod. Why does no other writer notice this truly notable event? Was not this during the Augustan age, when able writers—and some of them residing at Jerusalem—were numerous? Was not Judea at that time a Roman province? Would not the Roman government have called Herod to account for so atrocious a crime? Is it at all credible that so horrible a deed was ever committed in a civilized country, under the very eyes of many writers, and yet only one of them, the unknown author of the book of Matthew, ever notice it? Finally, is this story anything more or less than a mutilated version of the story of Kansa and Chrishna of India?

After bringing Jesus back from Egypt, Matthew abruptly drops him, and then just as abruptly reintroduces him, at the age of thirty years, as a star actor in the grand farce that gave rise to the Christian Religion—as a worker of miracles, and as a preacher of what, to most of the Jews, seemed new doctrines. Why this long silence, this utter failure to notice anything at all in nine-tenths of the entire life of the hero of his story? Is it at all credible that a person whose birth had been heralded by the sudden appearance of a wonderful star in the eastern heavens, and by many other remarkable phenomena; is it at all credible that a person who, while yet an infant, had been worshiped as the “born king of the Jews,” by “wise men from the east,” whose birth had caused Herod and all Jerusalem to be troubled, and some twenty thousand other infants to be butchered—is it at all credible, I ask, that this person passed into oblivion so perfect that all his friends and neighbors—even those who knew all the circumstances of his birth—came to believe that he was Joseph’s son and only an ordinary person? Is it at all credible that, for thirty years, such a person should neither say nor do anything worthy of record?

In regard to this same long period in the life of Jesus,

Luke is almost as reticent as is Matthew. Luke, however, does mention one event which he says occurred when Jesus was twelve years of age. This was a disputation which Jesus had with the doctors of divinity in the temple. In this disputation, he is said to have astonished everybody by the unheard-of wisdom of his replies; and, when his parents reproved him for having, without their permission, left them, he is said to have replied: "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" After this, Luke drops him for eighteen years.

And now, let me ask, if, at the age of twelve years, he had to be about his "Father's business"—if, at that early age, he astonished everybody by the wonderful beginning which he made in that "business," is it at all credible that he at once abandoned that "business," and, for eighteen years, did nothing to show that he was, in any respect, superior to other young men? Why are all his pretended biographers so utterly silent in regard to this long period of his life? Were they all ignorant of the history of that portion of his life, or did that history contain something which, if known to the world, would be fatal to the claims of the Christian Church? May not this extremely suspicious silence be because Jesus spent those unaccounted-for years, or at least a portion of them, in the great school of philosophy, at the neighboring city, Alexandria, learning like any other student, the wise teachings of Confucius, Buddha, Chrishna, and others of the world's great moral philosophers? Be this as it may, he taught no doctrines which had not been already taught by some of these great men—no doctrines that were not, during the very time in question, taught in the great school to which I have referred. He often used almost the very words of Chrishna and other great teachers who had preceded him. Where, then, and when, did he learn all of these things?

It is true that, without going to Alexandria, Jesus might have learned all the doctrines that he ever taught.

All of those doctrines were taught by the Essenes and the Therapeuts, both of which sects existed among the Jews, at the time of which I am speaking. Jesus is generally supposed to have belonged to the one or the other of these sects. At any rate, it is certain that he lived the life of an Essene, or, rather, of a Therapeut, and that his early followers were called Therapeuts, and not Christians. Indeed, the name Christian was finally forced upon them in derision by their enemies. Those who deny these facts, and who claim that Jesus originated a new religion and gave it a new name, simply expose their own ignorance of the subject or their own want of common honesty; and, at the same time, make liars of many if not of all of the early Christian writers.

Jesus lived and died a Jew. He never was a Christian. Since he never went out of Judaism, no one can be his follower who does go out of it. Justin Martyr, who is said to have been for a long time the companion of John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, says: "For in saying that all things were made in this beautiful order by God, what do we seem to teach more than Plato? When we teach a general conflagration, what do we teach more than the stoics? By opposing the worship of the works of men's hands, we concur with Menander, the comedian; and by declaring the Logos the first-begotten of God, our Master Jesus Christ, to be born of a virgin, without any human mixture, and to be crucified and dead, and to have risen again, and ascended into heaven, we say no more in this, than what you say of those whom you style the sons of Jove." Thus, from this great father, who knew the Christian Religion in its infancy, we learn that so far from being a new religion, as most of my opponents would fain have us believe that it was, Christianity was nothing more than a mere compilation of old pagan and Jewish doctrines that had been taught for many ages.

St. Augustine, the greatest of the Latin fathers, resenting the charge made by his enemies that he taught a

new religion, says: "What is now called the Christian Religion has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race, until Christ came in the flesh; from which time the true religion, which had existed already, began to be called Christian; and this in our days is the Christian religion; not as having been wanting in former times, but as having in later times received this name." Were it necessary, I could adduce much more testimony to the same effect from many others of the early Christian writers.

If, then, Jesus was a God, and, without ever having learned anything at all, possessed a full knowledge of all things, why did he never teach anything new? Why did he never teach anything that mere men had never been able to find out or to teach before him? Had men already found out and taught all that there was of any value to find out or to teach? And why did he wait till he was thirty years of age before he began to teach anything at all? Did he, or did he not, possess as much knowledge and as much power at three years of age as he did at thirty? If he did, then why did he not begin teaching and performing miracles at three years of age or earlier? If all of his works had been performed before he was three years of age—before he had had either time or opportunity to learn them of men—would they not have been a thousand times more convincing to mankind than they were when they were finally performed by a middle-aged man who had had a plenty of time and opportunity to learn all of these things of other men? Should not a God have been a little more successful than Jesus was? Should he not have been a little less dependent for his success upon the blind faith—the disgusting gullibility or the drunkenness of his audiences?

If, on the other hand, he did not know as much, and did not possess as much power at three years of age as he did at thirty, if his knowledge and his power were ever thus, like those of men, susceptible of being increased,

then, of necessity, they were as fully finite as are those of men; and, by no possibility, can that which is finite ever become infinite. On this hypothesis, Jesus, like any other man, or any other finite being of any kind, had, of necessity, to learn all of his doctrines before he could teach them, and all of his so-called miracles before he could perform them; and, since many years would be required for the thorough learning of all of these things, we can readily understand why it was that he did not appear before the public till he was of the ripe age of thirty years. We can also just as readily understand why it is that all of his pretended biographers are so totally silent in regard to so large a portion of his life. They very well knew that it would never do for the world to know that he had spent over half an ordinary lifetime learning the doctrines which he afterwards taught, and the feats which he afterwards performed. If the people knew these facts to-day, what would become of the Christian Church, and the power, the bread, and the butter of her vast armies of useless priests? And have not the priesthood always held that when ignorance pays better than knowledge, it is folly to render the people wise?

In John xiv, 12, we read: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." From this, it is clear that mere men, such as the believers on Jesus all are, can perform as great miracles as were ever performed by Jesus himself. The so-called miracles, then, which he is said to have performed, were, by his own positive declaration thus made, no proof at all that he was himself anything more than a mere man. This fact being thus established, I shall notice only a few of those so-called miracles. The text which I have just quoted also proves that all those of my opposers who profess to be believers on Jesus, but who, nevertheless, are unable to perform all the works which he performed, are nothing more nor less than hypocrites and impostors. Their only possible

means of escape from this grave charge is to prove that Jesus lied when he used the language above quoted.

In speaking of the crucifixion of Jesus, Matthew says that, from the sixth to the ninth hour, there was darkness over all the land; that there was an earthquake; that the vail of the temple was rent in twain; that the rocks were rent; and that the bodies of many saints arose from their graves, went into the city, and appeared unto many. None of the other gospel writers, however, say a word about any of these things. How are we to account for this strange silence? Do not the champions of the Bible all claim that some of these other writers, if not all of them, were present at the crucifixion of Jesus? If, then, any such wonderful phenomena had actually appeared on that occasion, would not some of these writers—these eye-witnesses—have been sure to notice them? And would not the Jews and the Romans, upon seeing these wonderful phenomena, have become believers on Jesus? Far gone as I myself am in unbelief, the beholding of such phenomena would certainly make a firm believer of me.

But did these things, and especially the rising of the bodies of the saints, actually occur? If they did, who were those saints whose bodies thus so unceremoniously left their graves, in which, like good and well-behaved corpses, they ought to have remained, and went into the city to frighten women, children, and nervous old men? I was not aware that the Jews ever had any saints; and, Christianity not being yet established, it was certainly rather too early for Christian saints, lively though they may be even after they are dead and buried, to come popping up in so abrupt a manner. How many of those bodies were there? How long had they been buried and how deep? How did they manage to get up through the earth that had been placed upon them? Who saw them rise and counted them? Who saw them go into the city? Who saw them after their arrival in the city? How were they received by their former friends? What did they do

while in the city? What excuse did they offer for their very uncorpsely conduct? Were they real living organizations composed of flesh, blood, and bones? Had they lungs, stomachs, intestines, sexual organs, etc.; and did these organs in them perform the same functions respectively that they perform in other living human bodies? Were these the same emaciated bodies that had been laid aside at death? If not, what bodies were they? Were they anything more than phantoms? Were they clothed or naked? If clothed, where did they get their clothes, and how? Did they buy new clothes, or were their old clothes resurrected together with themselves? Did those bodies have any souls or spirits in them? If they did, whence did those spirits come? Had they, too, like the bodies, been resting in the grave, or did they merely happen to be strolling down from heaven just at the time they were needed? And what finally became of those lively defunct saints? Did they remain among men, engage in business, and suffer death a second time, or did they, just as they then were, flesh, blood, bones, clothes, and all, manage somehow, without even a scaling ladder, to clamber up to heaven? These are all fair, pertinent, and important questions, but who dares even try to answer them?

Admitting, however, that all of these wonderful and extremely improbable phenomena actually did appear on the occasion in question, what do they prove in regard to the nature of Jesus? Absolutely nothing at all. I do not suppose that any of the champions of the Bible will claim that the dying Jesus himself, *in propria persona*, produced any of these phenomena. By whom, then, were they produced? Evidently by God himself. I do not suppose that any of the champions of the Bible will deny this fact. But could not God just as easily have produced these phenomena on the occasion of the death of a man as he could on that of the death of a demi-god? I am aware that my opponents declare that God would not, and, consequently, did not, ever produce any such phenomena on

the occasion of the death of a mere man. But when did God condescend to inform these gentlemen that he never would, and, consequently, never did, produce any such phenomena on the occasion of the death of a mere man? Is not their declaration founded entirely upon a pure and unwarrantable assumption? And is such an assumption of any value at all in an argument? Does it not simply show the utter desperation to which those are driven who make use of it? Could not I, with equal propriety, extend it a very little and assume that God never would, and, consequently, never did, produce any such phenomena on the occasion of the death of any one whatever?

Matthew says that, on a certain occasion, two men met Jesus, who cast out of them a legion of devils. As to what devils are, I do not pretend to know; but, from the fact that those of whom we are now speaking conversed intelligently with Jesus, in good Hebrew, they must have been intelligent beings like men. How many legions of these devils remained in the two men after this one legion had been ordered out, we are not informed. We are informed, however, that, at their own request, the legion that were then ordered out were permitted to enter into a herd of swine that chanced to be feeding not far away. We are also informed that, so soon as these poor persecuted devils were all comfortably established in their nice and warm new quarters, the swine took it into their silly heads to run down a steep place into the sea and drown themselves.

Luke says that, on this occasion, there was only one man met Jesus, and that he came out of the city, and not out of the tombs, as Matthew has it. He says, too, that the swine were drowned in a lake, and not, as Matthew has it, in the sea. He also says that this astounding miracle was performed in the country of the Gadarenes, and not, as Matthew has it, in that of the Gergesenes. And now, since these two conflicting accounts cannot possibly both be true, will the champions of the Bible be so kind as to inform us which one of them is true, and how

they know that it is true? If this monstrous hog-and-devil story be at all credible, what is there incredible in the tales of Gulliver, Sinbad the Sailor, or Jack the Giant Killer?

A legion contained about five thousand individuals. How large, then, could those devils have been and still have found an abundance of room and of necessary supplies, for so vast a number, inside the body of a single man or of a single hog, and that, too, without perceptibly increasing his size or impeding his motions? Of what form were they? In what part of the man or the hog did they reside? Whence did they come? What form of government did they have inside the body of that man or of that hog? Who was their chief ruler? At which end of the man or of the hog was their port of entry? Why did they, for their place of abode, select the body of a living man or a living hog? Was it to obtain food or to keep warm? When ordered out of the man, what was their order of march—by twos, by fours, or by platoons? Were they infantry or cavalry? Were they all males, or were both sexes represented among them? If they were all males, what was the use of their having any sex at all? Do not my opponents, in all things, perceive marks of design, and proofs of the existence of a great designer? What, then, was the design of the sexual organs of those poor devils, when there were no devilesses for them to use those organs upon? Who designed those worse than useless appendages? If both sexes were represented among them, did they breed and have little devils, or were their organs designed for pleasure alone? What effect upon the pork market had their entrance into the swine? When the swine were drowned, what became of the devils? Were they, being unused to water, drowned also? If not, why were they never again heard of?

And now, let me ask, can you be so totally blinded by priestcraft—so utterly bereft of reason and common sense—as to believe that a whole nation of intelligent beings

ever lived thus, and carried on a regular government—none but regular governments used the legion—inside the body of a single man or of a single hog? If you can believe this monstrous story, what is there too absurd for you to believe, if, like this story, it were only incorporated into your religion? And thus it is with almost all the balance of the so-called miracles said to have been performed by Jesus. Take almost any one of them, and we find that, as told by any one of the four evangelical writers, its absurdity sets reason, science, and common sense utterly at defiance, and that it is, moreover, plainly contradicted, or, in some other way, set at naught by some of the other three of these writers.

Matthew says that, on a certain occasion, Jesus healed two blind men. Speaking of the same occasion, Luke says that only one blind man was then healed. Do they both tell the truth, and must we believe both accounts or be eternally damned for our unbelief? Matthew says that Judas took his own life by hanging himself. The author of Acts declares that Judas died from the effects of a fall which seemed to have been entirely accidental. Are both of these accounts true? Did poor Judas, who simply acted the part assigned him by God in this grand farce, actually suffer death at two different times, in two different places, and from two different causes? Seeming to be a little perplexed by the utterly irreconcilable accounts given of this matter, Dr. Clarke very wisely suggests that Judas probably died of diarrhœa. Matthew says that Judas gave back to the priests the money that he had received for betraying Jesus, and that they bought the potter's field with it. The author of Acts, however, informs us that this account is utterly false in every particular—that Judas kept the money in question, and, with it, bought himself a field. Can both accounts be true? Mark says that Jesus was crucified at the third hour. John puts the crucifixion after the sixth hour. Matthew declares that the thieves who were crucified with Jesus both reviled him. Luke

declares that only one of them reviled him, and that the other reproved the reviler for his conduct. Can both accounts be worthy of our belief?

John says that the first visit to the sepulcher of Jesus was made by Mary Magdalene alone, who, like a brave little woman, came while it was yet dark. Matthew says that this first visit was made by two women who prudently waited till the day began to dawn. Mark says that this first visit was made by three women who still more prudently waited till about the rising of the sun. Luke says this first visit was made by five or more women who rather imprudently came very early. And are we, indeed, to be eternally damned if we find ourselves unable to believe all four of these utterly irreconcilable stories?

John says that when his one woman arrived at the sepulcher, she saw nothing at all. Matthew says that when his two women arrived, they saw an angel of the Lord sitting down on the outside of the sepulcher. Mark says that when his three women arrived, they saw a young man sitting down on the inside of the sepulcher. Luke says that when his five or more women arrived, they saw two men standing up. And now, in order to escape damnation, how many of these utterly irreconcilable stories are we obliged to believe?

Mark says that, after his resurrection, Jesus appeared first of all to Mary Magdalene alone, and that it was she who made known to the disciples and others the fact that he had arisen from the dead. Dealing, as usual, in twos, Matthew has Jesus make his first appearance to two Marys, and has them proclaim the glad news of his resurrection. Are both of these accounts true? These two writers agree in having Jesus make his first post-mortem appearance at Jerusalem. Luke, however, contradicts them both by having Jesus make this first appearance to two men near Emmaus, a village some distance from Jerusalem. Which account is true? Matthew says that, after his resurrection, Jesus first met his disciples on a moun-

tain in Galilee. Luke has this first meeting take place in a room at Jerusalem. Are both accounts true? Luke has Jesus make his final ascent into heaven from Bethany. Mark has him make it from a room in Jerusalem. The author of Acts has him make it from Mount Olivet. Matthew has him make it, or at least take his final leave of his disciples, from a mountain in Galilee. John has him do this at the sea of Tiberias. And now, if any one of these five utterly contradictory accounts be true, which one is it, and what proofs have we that it is true?

These are only a few of the many contradictions and absurdities that fill the books that pretend to give a true account of the sayings and doings of Jesus—of the books upon which the Christian Religion is essentially founded. In the eyes of all truly intelligent persons, however, these few are sufficient to utterly condemn the books in which they are found.

Since his whole claim to Godship depended upon his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven, why did not Jesus perform these his crowning acts in the sight of all the people? By so doing, he would, in a few moments, have done a thousand times more to convince the world of his divinity than he ever did by all of his other acts; a thousand times more than has ever been done, in nineteen hundred years, by his mighty armies of priests, aided though they have nearly always been by those most powerful of all persuaders, the sword, the dungeon, the rack, and the stake. Why, then, did he, after his resurrection, go slipping furtively about as if he were afraid or ashamed to be seen? Was he ashamed of having been executed as a convict, or was he afraid of being arrested, tried, convicted, and executed? Why did he never appear to any except a few persons who were all deeply interested in having the world believe that he had, indeed, arisen from the dead? Were not these deeply interested parties the very ones whose testimony in such a case was of the least possible value?

The champions of the Bible may claim that, on one occasion, Jesus did appear to over five hundred persons at once. But what proof have we that he ever did any such thing? Who were those five hundred persons? How many of them ever testified that they had seen Jesus on that occasion, and who heard their testimony? Paul alone notices this wonderful appearance, and he says that the five hundred and more who witnessed it were brethren. But were the brethren sufficiently numerous to assemble in so large congregations? Why does no one but Paul notice this wonderful appearance? And did he himself believe that any such appearance had ever been made? If his own testimony be of any value, he certainly did not. Long after this appearance is said to have taken place, and after he had heard all the testimony on the subject that there was to hear, he was, according to his own account, so thorough an unbeliever in the resurrection of Jesus that he verily thought he was doing God service when he was helping kill as many as possible of those who were believers in it. If he himself had been a believer in that resurrection, as he certainly must have been, if he believed that, after his crucifixion, Jesus had appeared to over five hundred of the brethren at one time, he certainly could not have thought that he was doing God service in putting to death other men for believing the same thing. Besides this, if he had believed that any such appearance of the resurrected Jesus had ever been made, would it have required a special miracle, as he declares that it did, to convert him to a belief in a doctrine that Jesus had risen from the dead? From all this, it is clear that, if Paul ever heard any report to the effect that, after his resurrection, Jesus had appeared unto over five hundred of the brethren at one time, he did not himself believe a word of that report. And since he, by his own admission, did not believe that report when coming directly from the lips of the pretended witnesses themselves, how can he expect us to believe it on mere hearsay testimony, and especially that of one single

individual himself who plainly intimates that he occasionally engaged in the holy occupation of lying in order that the glory of God might the more abound? May not this account of the appearance of Jesus to so many of the brethren be one of the very God-glorifying lies to which he refers? Who can say that it is not?

Nearly all the nations of the east have equally well authenticated accounts of the ascension into heaven of some one or more of their own distinguished personages. Indeed, this purely pagan idea that persons may and sometimes do thus ascend bodily into heaven is still an extremely popular one with nearly all persons who are sufficiently ignorant to believe that there actually is, as taught by the Bible, a heaven—a solid sky or firmament, fixed, like an inverted blue bowl, over a flat and stationary earth. Since science, however, has totally dissipated this solid sky or firmament—the only heaven that either pagans or Christians ever had—all truly intelligent persons have, as a matter of course, come to regard the idea of such bodily ascensions into heaven as too ridiculous for serious discussion. What is heaven now, and where is it?

In order to be up, as the Bible and its champions all teach that it is, from every part of the earth's surface, heaven must, of necessity, like the atmosphere, surround the earth on all sides; and must, also, of equal necessity, like the atmosphere, accompany her in all her revolutions around the sun. In other words, heaven, like the atmosphere, must, of necessity, be simply an invisible appendage of the earth—a kind of envelope or hollow sphere whose center coincides with the center of the earth, and whose motions coincide with those of the earth. And is this the only heaven into which Jesus ascended? That it is, we learn from the fact that it is utterly impossible to locate, or even to conceive of the location of, any other heaven, and from the additional fact that, when ascending into heaven, Jesus passed right upward from the earth, and for some time remained distinctly visible immediately

above those from whom he had just parted. The earth is known to move forward in her orbit at the almost inconceivable velocity of more than a thousand miles every minute—a velocity somewhat greater than that of an ordinary rifle ball. If, then, Jesus and the heaven into which he was ascending had not partaken of the earth's motion, would he have been visible at all? Would not the earth have instantly carried his friends onward out of sight of him, and would he not, in a few moments, have been left, far behind the earth, dangling in empty space? Must he not, then, be still in this same earth-enveloping heaven, within a few miles of the earth's surface, riding with us around the sun? And must not the old God, his putative father, be also in this same heaven and enjoying this same ride? And are not we, too, in the hollow interior of this same heaven? Being already in heaven, then, why need we talk of going to heaven?

Since, then, our own planet is thus accompanied, as it certainly must be, by its own peculiar heaven, and its own peculiar Gods, is it not fair to assume that every other planet is, in like manner, accompanied by its own peculiar God and its own peculiar heaven? Why should our own little planet alone be blessed with these special accompaniments? And, if they have no heaven of their own in which to continue their existence, what becomes of the righteous inhabitants of other planets after they die? Do they all come to our heaven? Would it not be utterly impossible for those at an infinite distance from our earth ever to reach our heaven? Besides this, if our God has charge of an infinite number of worlds and systems of worlds, why should he have selected our own little world, and it alone, as the place of his abode, and as the final dwelling-place of all the saints of this entire infinitude of mighty worlds? Why should he have given his only begotten son to die for the salvation of the inhabitants of our own little world alone, and why are none but the inhabitants of our own

world ever mentioned in his holy word as having anything at all to do either with us or our heaven?

If, however, heaven be not thus inseparably connected with the earth and her motions, where is it located, and of what does it consist? Does it belong within the solar system? If it does, is it a planet or a comet, and in what respect does it differ from any other planet or any other comet? In what respect is it better than the earth? If it is neither a planet nor a comet, what is it? How large is it? Why can we not discover it with the telescope? Does it revolve around the sun, or does it, unlike all other bodies, remain absolutely stationary in space? If it remained thus stationary, would it not, long before this, have been left at a very inconvenient distance behind by the sun, which, with his whole retinue of worlds, moves forward in his orbit at the rate of about thirty thousand miles an hour? If it moves with the sun, between the orbits of which two of the planets is it situated? How does it retain its relative position in the solar system and in space? How much farther do those have to travel to reach it who start when we are in that part of the earth's orbit which is farthest from it, than do those who start when we are in that part of the earth's orbit which is nearest to it? How much longer does it take the former to reach it than it takes the latter? And what means of conveyance have we for journeys so inconceivably immense?

If, on the other hand, heaven be not in the solar system, in what system is it, and how far is it from where we now are? Why should a preference have been given to that system? In what respect is it better than the solar system? And how long does it take us to reach that immensely distant heaven?

When we come to examine the matter in the light of reason, science, and common sense, does it not become clear as the noon-day sun that the whole idea of a local heaven rests entirely upon the now utterly exploded idea

of a solid sky or firmament standing, like an inverted bowl, over a flat and stationary earth? In order, then, to retain your heaven, are you not compelled also to retain your flat and stationary earth, your solid sky, etc.? Ask your priests to clearly define the location of the heaven they preach, and you will at once discover that they know no more about any such place than they know about the native country of the Great Giascutis or of the Great Jumping Jingo. Better have them, then, locate heaven before you pay them any more money for those buncombe speeches which they call sermons.

In their desperation, however, the champions of the Bible boldly assert that Jesus and his works were foretold by the prophetic writers of the Old Testament. The truth of this assertion, however, I deny *in toto*, and defy these champions to point out a single passage in the Old Testament which, when taken with its context, can be fairly so construed as to make it even remotely refer to Jesus.

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt. i, 23). This is the first, the plainest, and by far the most important of all the passages quoted, in the New Testament, from the Old, and claimed to be prophecies of Jesus. If, then, I fully demonstrate, as I certainly shall, that this passage has no reference to Jesus, what can you hope from any of the other passages in question?

The language which Matthew professes to quote, but which, according to what you will find to be his invariable custom, he grossly misquotes, was spoken by Isaiah to Ahaz, king of Judah. At the time it was spoken, Ahaz was greatly troubled because of the approach of the united forces of his two great enemies, the king of Israel and the king of Syria. Isaiah, therefore, assuming to be God’s mouth-piece, as Balaam’s ass is said to have been on a former occasion, undertook to encourage Ahaz to make a

manly defense, by assuring him that the two kings whose approach was so troubling him should not prevail against him; and that, in a short time, their own kingdoms should be rendered desolate by the king of Assyria.

In order to make Ahaz believe these very comforting assurances, Isaiah informed him that God would confirm them by a certain sign. This sign, Isaiah then proceeded to describe in the following language: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings" (Is. vii, 14-16).

The emergency which rendered the sign necessary being immediate, the sign itself, to be of any value, had, of course, to be immediate also. So far from being able to wait seven hundred and fifty years, as our priests would fain have us believe that he was expected to wait, for Mary and her son to be signs of the things predicted, Ahaz had to have a sign before the close of the war in which, at that very time, he was engaged. Without any delay, therefore, Isaiah himself proceeded to prepare the sign which he himself had proposed. God does not seem to have had anything to do in the matter. His manner of preparing the sign, Isaiah describes as follows: "And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. And I went unto the prophetess [his own wife, Mrs. Isaiah]; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the Lord to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria" (Is. viii, 2-4).

Having thus himself selected his own child to be a sign on this occasion, just as he himself had doubtless selected his own other children to be signs on former occasions,

Isaiah boasts: "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion" (Is. viii, 18). The famous virgin in question, then, was no other than Mrs. Isaiah, the prophet's own wife, who was already the mother of several children, and who, like a sensible woman and a good wife, conceived of her own husband, and not, as our priests labor to make us believe that Mary did seven hundred and fifty years afterwards, of an old bachelor ghost. Mrs. Isaiah's child, too, was a pure human being, and not, as Mary's child is said to have been, a hybrid monstrosity, half man and half ghost. In order that the world might be sure that no ghost had anything to do with this achievement, Isaiah, as he informs us, very prudently had two faithful witnesses present to see and to record that he himself, *in propria persona*, begat the child in question. Had the ghost, who, as our preachers would fain have us believe, afterwards begat Jesus, used similar precaution, and had two faithful witnesses present to see and to record that he himself actually did beget the child in question, and that no man had anything to do in the matter, would not the world be a great deal more certain than they now are that the child was, indeed, the literally begotten son of the said ghost?

The child, then, and the only child, to which this so-called prophecy refers, was, as you see, begotten and born just as are all other children—begotten and born, too, seven hundred and fifty years before the birth of Jesus. Besides this, the child in question was never called Jesus. He was called Maher-shalal-hash-baz. As to his mother's being a virgin, that amounts to nothing at all. Every Bible critic knows that, in ancient times, and especially among the Jews, the word virgin was not restricted, as it now usually is, in its application, to those women only who had never sexually known a man, but was applied, indiscriminately, to all virtuous women, and even to virtuous men, whether they were married or single. A true wife—

a good mother—was just as much a virgin as was the woman who had never known a man. Although Mrs. Isaiah had certainly known her own husband, yet, being a virtuous woman—a true wife—she was still properly called a virgin. All of our best educated and most intelligent ministers of the gospel know these things to be facts, but it is not to their interest that the people should be equally well informed. Hence the general ignorance of the people in regard to these matters.

All that this pretended prophecy of Jesus amounts to, therefore, is, that in order to encourage his king, Isaiah staked his reputation as a seer or fortune-teller upon the result of the war in which, at that very time, the king was engaged. If Isaiah proved a correct fortune-teller or seer, then, before a child, which was to be immediately begotten, could be born, and could be able to say father and mother, that is, within three years at most, Ahaz would see his enemies utterly overthrown. Unfortunately, however, for Isaiah's reputation as a fortune-teller or seer, and also for the safety of Ahaz and his people, the sign utterly failed. So far from being driven out of their own kingdoms, as Isaiah predicted that they would be, those two kings beat Ahaz in battle, killed over 120,000 of his men, and carried away as captives over 200,000 women and children. These facts we learn from the twenty-eighth chapter of 2 Chronicles. This pretended prophecy, then, had no reference whatever to Jesus, and was, moreover, an extremely poor guess. And thus crumbles, like sand, the main prophetic prop of that monstrous priestly imposition, the Christian Religion.

Under the circumstances with which he was surrounded, Ahaz could not be otherwise than filled with anxiety, and overburdened with business cares. Messengers from the front were constantly arriving with the most fearful intelligence. The invading forces were far superior to his own, and defeat at their hands involved either death or slavery to both himself and his people. All around him

were uproar and confusion, and he, to whom all looked for safety, was himself beginning to tremble under the terrible panic that had seized upon his people. As Isaiah himself very forcibly expresses it, the king's "heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind." To encourage him, therefore, under these peculiarly trying circumstances, Isaiah, who seems to have been a man remarkable for coolness, hopefulness, and courage, simply staked his own reputation as a fortune-teller or guesser at future events upon the prediction which I have just noticed.

This is substantially the story as told by Isaiah himself; and, when thus told, it is both natural and reasonable. When told, however, as our priests tell it, what could be more unnatural or more unreasonable? Although we pay them to teach us the truth, which they always profess to be both able and willing to teach, these priests labor hard to make us believe that, amid the general alarm and confusion of the occasion, when the king was overburdened with business and anxiety, Isaiah, like an old idiot, came and began to prate to him about a young woman who, seven hundred and fifty years afterwards, without being married, was to have a baby begotten by an old bachelor ghost. They labor hard to make us believe that this incorrigible old idiot even went so far in his folly as to propose this supremely ridiculous seven-hundred-and-fifty-year-ghost-baby affair as a sign by which Ahaz was to know what was to be the result of the war in which, at that very time, he was engaged. Can two intelligent priests, while preaching this monstrous nonsense, look each other in the face without laughing?

Do you really believe that Isaiah was fool enough to come, at such a time, to prate to the king about this ghost and its supposed offspring? And would the king have listened to any such nonsense? Would he have cared a fig who was to have a baby, seven hundred and fifty years after his own time, or who was to be the father of that

baby? How would it be now, if, on the eve of a great battle, some old idiot should come to prate such nonsense to the commander of a great army?

After describing various circumstances connected with the crucifixion of Jesus, John says: "For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken." Here we are gravely informed that the language concerning the bone had been spoken prophetically concerning Jesus; that it was his bones that were not to be broken; and that, for the express purpose of fulfilling this prophecy, and of thereby condemning themselves, his executioners refrained from breaking his bones.

The scripture which John here professes to quote, but which, in fact, he grossly misquotes, is found in Ex. xii, 46, and, with a portion of its context, reads as follows: "In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house: neither shall ye break a bone thereof." This language, you perceive, is mandatory and not prophetic. It was spoken by Moses, not concerning Jesus, whom the Hebrews were never commanded to kill and eat, and who did not live till about 1,500 years afterwards, but concerning the ram which each family of the Hebrews were commanded to kill, to roast, and to eat, within a few days, at what was called the feast of the passover. As I have already said, John grossly misquotes the language of this command. By changing the gender of the pronoun, and both the mood and the tense of the verb, he has entirely changed both the meaning and the construction of the whole passage, and thus rendered his pretended quotation a vile imposition or forgery.

No sane man, I suppose, will attempt to deny that all portions of the command in question refer to the same thing. If, then, any portion of that command, such as the prohibition to break his bones, refers to Jesus, then, of necessity, all the other portions, such as those that en-

join the killing, the dressing, the roasting, and the eating of him, must refer to him also. By simply using the word Jesus, therefore, in place of the word lamb, we will have the meaning of the whole command—of the whole prophecy, if you prefer this term—according to the rendering given of it by John and by the Christian Priesthood generally. “Your *Jesus* shall be without blemish, a male [a female Jesus would never answer your purpose] of the first year [not an old ram or Jesus of thirty-three years]: ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats: and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. A foreigner, and a hired servant shall not eat thereof. In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house: neither shall ye break a bone thereof.” Here are six verses; and, in order to make them apply to Jesus, I have changed only one word in them all. In order to make the last clause alone, of the last verse, apply to Jesus, John, however, makes five changes of words, one change of gender, one of mood, and one of tense—eight changes in all in a clause containing only seven words. By this abominable mutilation, he undertakes to change a plain command into a mystic prophecy, a common scrub ram into a Almighty God! And the whole Christian Priesthood have united in their wicked efforts to palm off this monstrous imposition upon the ever gullible people.

And now, let me ask, does not all of this language apply to Jesus, just as much as does the last clause of the last verse? In order, then, to have the whole pretended prophecy fulfilled, should not John have had Jesus roasted and eaten as well as exempted from having his bones

broken? Thus falls another of the prophetic props of Christian priestcraft.

Speaking of Joseph, Matthew says: "When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, *Out of Egypt have I called my Son*" (Matt. ii, 14, 15). The language which Matthew here falsely pretends to quote, is found in Hos. xi, 1, and reads as follows: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." The son, then, that was called out of Egypt, was the Hebrew nation, and not Jesus. This fact is made still more clear by Ex. iv, 22, 23, in which we read: "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born. And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me." What could be plainer than this?

As I have already stated, Matthew grossly misquotes all the language that he professes to quote from the Old Testament. In the present case, he has not deviated from his uniform custom. Speaking, as he does, of a past event, Hosea very properly uses the past or historical tense. Matthew, however, changes his meaning, by quoting him in the prior-present or perfect tense. By writing the word *son* with a small *s*, Hosea clearly shows that he does not mean to apply the word to the deity, all the appellations of which begin with capitals. In his pretended quotation, however, by writing the word *son* with a capital *S*, Matthew falsely represents Hosea as applying this word to the deity. What are we to think of the honesty of a writer who, to deceive his readers, thus habitually mutilates and changes all the language that he professes to quote? And what are we to think of our preachers who, almost unanimously, sustain him in this despicable course of fraud?

From all of this, it is clear that, if the scripture in question refers to Jesus, he must have been the whole

Hebrew nation, and not a single individual only. The champions of the Bible, however, may claim that, in the loins of an ancestor of that generation, Jesus was called out of Egypt, with the Hebrew nation, and that, consequently, the language in question does apply to him. This may all be true, if he was a mere man, and had a male ancestor among the Hebrews who were called out of Egypt. If, however, as all of these champions profess to believe, Jesus never had a human father, then he could not possibly have been thus called out of Egypt. Indeed, if, in the time of Moses, God called his son out of Egypt, then the language in question, being written long after that time, constituted simply a historical statement, and not a prophecy. No fulfilment, therefore, of that language was either necessary or possible. Why, then, should Jesus, many centuries afterward, have had to go down into Egypt, in order that, by being called out thence, he might fulfil this same scripture? In attempting thus to palm off, upon the world, as a prophecy of Jesus, this purely historical statement concerning the Hebrews, does not Matthew prove himself to be woefully wanting in common honesty? And do not those of our preachers, who knowingly sustain him in this dishonest act, prove themselves to be equally wanting in the same great virtue? Thus falls still another of the prophetic props of that monstrous imposition, the Christian Religion.

“And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, *He shall be called a Nazarene*” (Matt. ii, 23). Here, again, according to his invariable custom, Matthew grossly misquotes the language of this pretended prophecy. None of the prophets ever said of Jesus, or of any one else, “He shall be called a Nazarene.” And none of them ever conveyed in any other words any such meaning as is conveyed by this forged quotation. The only language in the Old Testament that bears the slightest resemblance to this pretended quotation is found in Jud. xiii, 5, and reads as

follows: "For lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head; for the child shall be a *Nazarite* unto God from the womb." It is doubtless to this passage that our inveterate mutilator, Matthew, refers. This language, however, was spoken, not to Mary concerning her son Jesus, but, nearly twelve hundred years before Mary's time, to the wife of Manoah, concerning her son, Samson. Besides this, the passage declares that he shall *be* a *Nazarite*, and not, as Matthew misquotes it, that "he shall be *called* a *Nazarene*."

Although the words *Nazarene* and *Nazarite* are somewhat similar in *form*, their similarity is entirely accidental. It does not arise from any similarity of *meaning*. In meaning, the words are no more similar than are the words *Londoner* and *Freemason*. Indeed, the word *Nazarene* does bear to the word *Nazarite* exactly the same relation that the word *Londoner* bears to the word *Freemason*. As a *Londoner* is simply an inhabitant of London, so a *Nazarene* was simply an inhabitant of Nazareth. With a *Nazarite*, however, the case was quite otherwise. As does a *Freemason* now, so did a *Nazarite* then, take his name from his connection with a certain fraternity; or from his being bound by a solemn oath or vow to perform certain duties which are not required to be performed by other men.

As it is with a *Londoner* now, so it was with a *Nazarene* then; in regard to his mode of living, he was under no more restrictions than were the inhabitants of any other Jewish city. A *Nazarite*, on the contrary, was bound to let his hair grow without cutting, and to abstain from the use of all luxuries, especially wine, vinegar, and grapes. Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist are all the *Nazaries* that I find mentioned in the entire Bible.

Being an inhabitant of Nazareth, Jesus was very properly called a *Nazarene*. He was not so called "from the *womb*," however, as he should have been had the so-called prophecy in question had any reference to him. So far

from being, in his habits, a Nazarite, he was wont to indulge to such an extent in the luxuries of the table that, when the people beheld him, they were wont to exclaim: "Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber." By changing the word Nazarite into Nazarene, Matthew proves himself to have been either a fool or a knave; or, at best, a very poor punster—a mere player upon words. In any view of the case, his writings are utterly worthless.

"And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold thy king cometh sitting on an ass's colt" (John xii, 14, 15). Dealing, as usual, in twos, Matthew gives quite a different account of this affair. He also gives quite a different quotation of the scripture, of which this affair is claimed to have been the fulfilment. Instead of having Jesus himself thus find one ass and mount it, Matthew, (xxi, 1-7,) has him send two of his disciples to steal, or at least to take without leave, two asses; has the disciples place him upon these two asses, and has him ride them both, at the same time, into Jerusalem.

What a figure he must have cut, riding thus into Jerusalem, upon the backs of those two asses, and followed by a yelling mob of admiring vagrants! Just picture to yourselves the President of the United States riding thus into Washington, the Prince of Wales riding thus into London, or the Emperor of Germany riding thus into Berlin! What could be more supremely ridiculous than is the very idea of such a jackassical performance, when that idea is associated with grand personages like these? What monstrous blasphemy it is, then, to represent the infinite power that rules the universe—the Almighty himself, if you please—as performing that supremely ridiculous feat for the fulfilment of a pretended and silly prophecy! Do you really believe that the infinite power in question—that what you call God—ever did inspire any one to write such silly stuff about itself, or that, in the form and character of a clown, it ever did perform any

such ridiculous feat of assmanship? Could not this prophecy, as you call it, have been equally well fulfilled by any other man who might have seen fit to make himself ridiculous by thus riding two asses at once into Jerusalem? Infidel as I am, I would be sorry to tell such a story concerning your God.

The scripture to which Matthew and John both refer, and which they seem to vie with each other in misquoting, is found in Zech. ix, 9, and reads as follows: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation: lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Who it was that came thus as a king to Jerusalem, "riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass," I do not pretend to know. I do pretend to know, however, that, although Zechariah wrote in the present tense, as if witnessing the scenes he was describing, he was giving the history of events which, according to the accepted chronology of the Bible, occurred some sixty-seven years before. Of necessity, then, the language is historical and not prophetic. In order to be prophetic, language must, of necessity, refer to the future. No one can possibly prophesy or foretell a past or a present event. To describe, as does Zechariah, such an event, is simply to write history. Thus falls another of the main prophetic props of the most dangerous form of priestcraft.

I have now fully and fairly examined five of the most important of the so-called prophecies of Jesus, and have found that not one of them refers to him at all. I have found that they all refer to matters which were either past or present, at the time they were written—matters, too, which were of no interest to anybody but the Jews. I have found also that these so-called prophecies are all of such a nature that almost anyone, who might have seen fit to do so, could have procured their apparent fulfilment. I have shown that, whether by accident or design, Joseph

did himself bring about the apparent fulfilment of three of these so-called prophecies. I have shown that by simply dreaming, or, rather, by simply pretending to dream, that Mary was with child of a ghost and not of a man, he fully satisfied the conditions of the pretended prophecy that a virgin should conceive, etc.; that by taking Jesus down into Egypt, and bringing him out thence, he fully satisfied the conditions of the pretended prophecy in which God is made to declare that he has called his son out of Egypt; and that, by taking Jesus to live in Nazareth, he fully satisfied the conditions of the pretended prophecy that some one should be called a Nazarene. Had any other person seen fit to dream, or to pretend to dream, that some other young woman was with child of a ghost; had he then taken this young woman's illegitimate child, after its birth, down into Egypt and then brought it out again; and had he then taken it to live at Nazareth, would he not, with that child, have fulfilled all three of these pretended prophecies, just as well as Joseph fulfilled them with Mary's child? In regard to the pretended prophecy that some one should ride into Jerusalem "upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass," I have shown that it could have been equally well fulfilled by any other clown who might have seen fit to enter that city in so ridiculous a manner. And as to the pretended prophecy that somebody's or something's bones should not be broken, it clearly has been fulfilled by every man, every ox, every sheep, etc., that has been so fortunate as to pass through life with unbroken bones.

For want of time, I cannot notice any more of the so-called prophecies of Jesus. All of the others, however, are just as easily disposed of as are those which I have noticed. Not one of them will bear the test of fair investigation. They all prove to be mere priestly impositions, as does also the entire doctrine that Jesus or any one else was ever the literal son of God.

With these remarks I close this long course of lectures,

to the preparation of which I have devoted several of the best years of my life. That a few unimportant errors may be found in these lectures, and harped upon by the enemies of free thought, is quite probable; but that, as a whole, my work is a great and good one, I fully believe will be the decision of the ablest thinkers of the world.

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